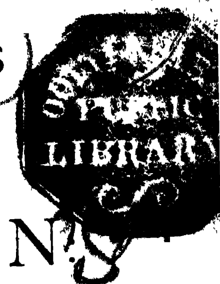


THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN MILTON



EDITED,
WITH INTRODUCTIONS, NOTES,
AND AN ESSAY ON MILTON'S ENGLISH,

BY

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Sonnets and Kindred Pieces *continued*:—

INTRODUCTION

TO

PARADISE REGAINED.

PARADISE REGAINED seems to have been complete in manuscript before the publication of *Paradise Lost.* This we infer from an interesting passage in the Autobiography of the Quaker, Thomas Ellwood, in which he gives an account of the origin of *Paradise Regained*, and claims the credit of having suggested the subject to Milton. We have already seen (Introduction to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 53, 54,) how young Ellwood, visiting Milton, in 1665, at the cottage in Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire, where he was then residing to avoid the Great Plague in London, had a manuscript given him by the poet, with a request to read it at his leisure, and return it with his judgment thereon. On taking this manuscript home with him, Ellwood tells us, he found it to be *Paradise Lost.* He then proceeds as follows:—"After I had, "with the best attention, read it through, I made him another "visit, and returned him his book, with due acknowledgment of "the favour he had done me in communicating it to me. He "asked how I liked it, and what I thought of it; which I modestly, "but freely, told him: and, after some further discourse about it, "I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much here of *Paradise* "*Lost*; but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found?*' He "made me no answer, but sate some time in a muse, then brake "off that discourse and fell upon another subject. After the "sickness was over, and the city well cleansed and become safely "habitable again, he returned thither. And when, afterwards, I "went to wait on him there (which I seldom failed of doing, "whenever my occasions drew me to London), he showed me his "second poem, called *Paradise Regained*, and in a pleasant tone

" said to me, 'This is owing to you; for you put it into my head " by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I " had not thought of.'" * The inference from this passage may certainly be that the poem was at least begun in the cottage at Chalfont St. Giles (say in the winter of 1665-6), and that, if not finished there, it was finished in Milton's house in Artillery Walk, shortly after his return to town in 1666. When *Paradise Lost*, therefore, was published in the autumn of 1667, its sequel, though kept back, was ready.

According to this calculation, the poem remained in manuscript for about four years. It was not published till 1671, when *Paradise Lost* had been in circulation for four years, and when the first edition of that poem must have been nearly, if not quite, exhausted —for that edition was restricted to 1,500 copies at the utmost, and Milton's receipt for the second five pounds, due, by agreement, on the sale of 1,300 of these copies, bears date April 26, 1669. But, for some reason or other, Simmons, the publisher of *Paradise Lost*, was delaying a second edition of that poem—which did not appear till 1674. It may have been owing to dissatisfaction with this delay on Milton's part that he did not put *Paradise Regained* into Simmons's hands, but had it printed (as appears) on his own account. Conjoining with it *Samson Agonistes*, which he also had for some time by him, or had just composed, he issued the two poems in a small octavo volume of 220 pages, with this general title-page—" *Paradise Regain'd. A Poem. In IV. Books.* " *To which is added Samson Agonistes. The Author John Milton.* " *London, Printed by J. M. for John Starkey at the Mitre in* " *Fleetstreet, near Temple Bar. MDCLXXI.*" There is no separate title-page to *Paradise Regained;* which commences on the next leaf after this general title, and extends to p. 112 of the volume. Then there is a separate title-leaf to *Samson Agonistes;* which poem, occupying the rest of the volume, is separately paged. On the last leaf of the whole volume are two sets of *Errata*, entitled "Errata in the former Poem" and "Errata in the latter Poem."

Not Samuel Simmons of the Golden Lion in Aldersgate Street, the publisher of *Paradise Lost*, it will be seen, but John Starkey, of

* The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, Second Edition (1714), pp. 246, 247.

the Mitre in Fleet Street, was the publisher of the new volume. He was, however, the publisher only, or agent for the printer "J. M." Such, at all events, is the inference of so good an authority in such matters as the late Mr. Leigh Sotheby, who, after quoting the title of the volume, as above, adds: "It is interesting here to notice that the initials of Milton occur in the "imprint as the *printer* of the volume. Such was frequently the "case when a work was printed solely at the expense of the "author." * In connexion with which observation we may here note the entry of the volume in the books of the Stationers' Company:

Septemb. 10, 1670: Mr. John Starkey entered for his copie, under the hands of Mr. Tho. Tomkyns and Mr. Warden Roper, a copie or Booke Intituled Paradise regain'd, A Poem in 4 Bookes. The Author John Milton. To which is added Samson Agonistes, a drammadic [*sic*] Poem, by the same Author.

The volume itself furnishes an additional item of information. On the page opposite the general title-page at the beginning is this brief imprint, "Licensed, July 2, 1670"—from which it appears that the necessary licence had been obtained by Milton, from the censor Tomkyns. Apparently Tomkyns gave this licence more easily than he had given that for *Paradise Lost.*

The volume containing the first editions of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* is handsome enough in appearance—the paper thicker than that of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, and the type more distinct and more widely spaced. But the printing, especially the pointing, is not nearly so accurate. Within the first few pages one finds commas where there should be full stops or colons, and *vice versâ*, and becomes aware that the person or persons who assisted Milton in seeing the volume through the press cannot have been so careful as those who performed the like duty for the former poem—where, though the pointing is not our modern pointing, it rarely conflicts with the sense.

Whatever was the number of copies printed, it sufficed the demand during the rest of Milton's life, and for six years beyond. When he died in 1674, there was a second edition of the *Paradise Lost*, to be followed by a third in 1678; but it was not till 1680 that there was a second edition of the *Paradise Regained* and

* Ramblings in the Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton, 1861, p. 83.

Samson. It was brought out by the same publisher, Starkey, and is of inferior appearance and getting-up to the first—the size still small octavo, but the type closer, so as to reduce the number of pages to 132. The title-pages remain the same; but the two poems are now paged continuously, and not separately. There seems to have been no particular care in revising for the press, for errors noted in the list of errata in the former edition remain uncorrected in the text of this. Appended to the volume is an advertisement, in four pages, of books printed for Starkey. They are chiefly medical and historical; but among them is an edition of Sir William Davenant's collected works.

Third editions, both of the *Paradise Regained* and of the *Samson*, appeared in folio in 1688, sold, either together or separately, by a new publisher—Randal Taylor; and these are commonly found bound up with the fourth or folio edition of *Paradise Lost*, published by another bookseller in the same year. From this time forward, in fact, the connexion between *Paradise Regained* and *Samson*, originally accidental, is not kept up, save for mere convenience in publication. The tendency was to editions of all Milton's poetical works collectively—in which editions it was natural to put *Paradise Lost* first, then *Paradise Regained*, then *Samson Agonistes*, and after these the *Minor Poems*. The greater demand for *Paradise Lost*, however, making it convenient to divide the Poetical Works in publication, two methods of doing so presented themselves. On the one hand, there was an obvious propriety, if the Poems were to be divided at all, in detaching *Paradise Regained* from *Samson* and the rest, and attaching it to *Paradise Lost;* and, accordingly, there are instances of such conjoint editions of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, apart from the other poems, in 1692, 1775, and 1776. But a more convenient plan, mechanically, inasmuch as it divided the Poems collectively into two portions of nearly equal bulk, was to let *Paradise Lost* stand by itself in one or more volumes, and throw *Paradise Regained*, *Samson*, and the *Minor Poems* together into a separate issue in one or more volumes—the two sets combinable or not into a collective edition. This plan, first adopted by Tonson, in 1695, has prevailed since; and in the eighteenth century I count nine separate editions of *Paradise Regained*, *Samson*, and the *Minor Poems* (the most notable being Tonson's of 1713, Fenton's of 1725, and Tonson's of 1747),

against thirty-five or thirty-six separate editions of *Paradise Lost* —not reckoning the expressly collective editions of all the Poetical Works which appeared in the meantime. Exceptional editions, I believe, are one of *Paradise Regained* by itself at Edinburgh in 1785, another at Alnwick in 1793, and another at London, in quarto, with variorum notes by Dunster, in 1795. I find no case after 1688 of the re-association of the *Paradise Regained* and the *Samson*, in an edition apart from the other poems.

There is not the least reason for doubting Ellwood's statement as to the way in which the subject of *Paradise Regained* was suggested to Milton. There is no such evidence as in the case of *Paradise Lost* of long meditation of the subject previous to the actual composition of the poem. Among Milton's jottings, in 1640-1, of subjects for dramas, or other poems (see Introduction to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 43, 44), there are indeed several from the New Testament History. There is a somewhat detailed scheme of a drama, to be called *Baptistes*, on the subject of the death of John the Baptist at the hands of Herod. There are also seven notes of subjects from the Life of Christ—the first entitled *Christus Patiens*, accompanied by a few words which show that, under that title, Milton had an idea of a drama on the scene of the Agony in the Garden; the others entered simply as follows: "*Christ Born*," "*Herod Massacring, or Rachel Weeping* (Matt. ii.)," "*Christ Bound*," "*Christ Crucified*," "*Christ Risen*," and "*Lazarus* (John xi.)" But not one of those eight subjects, thought of in Milton's early manhood, it will be seen, corresponds with the precise subject of *Paradise Regained*, executed when he was verging on sixty. The subject of that poem is expressly and exclusively the Temptation of Christ by the Devil in the Wilderness, after his Baptism by John, as related in Matt. iv. 1–11, Mark i. 12, 13, and Luke iv. 1–13. Commentators on the Poem, indeed, have remarked it as somewhat strange that Milton should have given so general a title as "Paradise Regained" to a poem representing only this particular passage of the Gospel History. For the subject of the Poem is thus announced in the opening lines—

"I, who erewhile the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing

Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness."

On which passage, and on the Poem generally, a commentator (Thyer), representing a general feeling, makes this remark: "It "may seem a little odd that Milton should impute the recovery "of Paradise to this short scene of our Saviour's life upon earth, "and not rather extend it to His Agony, Crucifixion, &c. But "the reason, no doubt, was that Paradise *regained* by our Saviour's "resisting the temptations of Satan might be a better contrast to "Paradise *lost* by our first parents too easily yielding to the same "seducing Spirit." This remark is perfectly just; but it receives elucidation and point from Ellwood's story of the way in which the poem came into existence.

The young Quaker, by his casual observation, in the cottage at Chalfont St. Giles, "Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost;* but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found?*" had stirred something in Milton's mind. He made no answer, but "sat some time in a muse," and then talked of something else. But an idea had flashed through him—the idea of a sequel to *Paradise Lost*, to be called *Paradise Regained.* Had he not, in *Paradise Lost* itself, assumed, and pointed throughout to, the possibility of such a sequel? Thus, even in the opening lines of the poem, defining its scope:—

"Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, *till one greater Man*
Restore us and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse."

Here he had actually limited beforehand the horizon of the poem on which he was engaged. He had limited it by the perception of a new event in the distance, retrieving the catastrophe he was about to sing.* Might not that new event also be made

* It occurs to me as not impossible that Milton, having finished *Paradise Regained* in manuscript before *Paradise Lost* was printed, may have touched into the text of *Paradise Lost* here and there such occult pre-advertisements of its successor as that in the opening lines.

the theme of a poem? And, if so, would it not be fit, as his young Quaker friend had hinted, that he, who had sung the loss of Eden, should treat also this theme of its recovery?

This idea once in Milton's mind, there is no difficulty in seeing how the story of *Paradise Regained*, as conceived by him, should have concentrated itself in the single passage of the Gospel History known as the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness, rather than diffused itself through the entire range of Christ's ministry and passion. In *his* hands, at least, the second poem must correspond with the first—must presuppose it, and be the artistic antithesis to it. Now what had been the theme of the first poem? The Temptation of the first of men, and its results. Seeking for the most exact antithesis to this in the life of the "one greater man" by whom these results were to be retrieved, of what would the poet so readily think as of the Temptation to which *He* was subjected with an issue so different? Why not concentrate, poetically or representatively, the whole of Christ's achievement, in undoing the effects of the Fall and restoring Paradise, on the issue of that second Temptation which stood out in such contrast with the first? If a single portion of Christ's history were to be taken, it behoved to be this portion, where, more directly than in any other, Christ is brought into contact with the Evil One who had figured as the hero of the first poem, and had there borne away the victory. That same Satan, the story of whose fortunes, from his rebellion in Heaven down to his temptation of Adam and conquest thereby of Earth and the Universe of Man, forms the true thread of events in the first poem, here reappears in changed guise, after some thousands of years of his diabolic life amid those mundane elements the possession of which he had won for himself and his crew. He reappears; and, remembering all that we had read of him before, we are called upon to behold him once again in action—to behold him meeting Jesus, or the Second Adam, in a deliberate encounter more protracted than that with the first, and feeling himself foiled, and knowing in consequence that the prophesied era of the world's redemption has arrived, and the cessation of his own rule before a stronger force. In order that Satan, who had figured so largely in the first poem, might have his due place in the second, it was almost necessary to select the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness as the incident to be

developed in the second. Any theological objection that there might be to the seeming imputation thereby of the recovery of Paradise to one short scene in Christ's life, and that but preliminary to his main recorded ministry, might be obviated by representing the scene so that it should be typical of the ministry as a whole. It might be impressed on readers that here, at the very beginning of Christ's ministry, Satan, encountering Him, knew that he had met his match, and that all that followed in the whole ministry, to its close, was virtually certain from the date of this initial act of superiority to Satan.

Only by firmly remembering that it was as a sequel to *Paradise Lost* that *Paradise Regained* thus grew into shape in Milton's mind, will the second poem be rightly understood. The commentators, indeed, as they have sought the "origin of Paradise Lost," or hints for its origin, in all sorts of previous poems, Italian, Latin, and Dutch, on the same subject (see our Introduction to the Poem), have, though less laboriously, searched for previous poems from which Milton may have taken hints for his *Paradise Regained.* Todd, in his preliminary observations entitled "Origin of Paradise Regained," refers to the following pieces as possibly in Milton's recollection while he was writing the Poem,—Bale's *Brefe Comedy or Enterlude concernynge the Temptacyon of our Lorde and Saver Jesus Christ by Sathan in the Desart* (1538); Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Victorie and Triumph* (1611), a poem in four parts, the second of which, entitled "Christ's Triumph on Earth," describes the Temptation; also *La Humanità del Figlivolo di Dio,* a poem in ten books, by Theofilo Folengo of Mantua (1533); *Là Vita et Passione di Christo,* a poem by Antonio Cornozano (1518); and one or two other Italian poems cited at random for their titles and not from knowledge. The only one of these references worth much is that to Giles Fletcher's religious poem. Giles Fletcher (died 1623), and his brother Phineas Fletcher, who outlived him more than twenty-five years, were among the truest poets in the interval between Spenser and Milton, and the highest in that ideal or Spenserian faculty which Milton possessed and admired. He must have known the works of both brothers well, and not least the really fine poem of Giles Fletcher to which Todd refers. But recollection of it can have had no effect on the *scheme* of his own *Paradise Regained.* That was determined simply

by the poet's own meditations on those passages of the Evangelists which narrate the Temptation in the Wilderness,—especially the eleven verses in Matt. iv. and the thirteen in Luke iv.—with a view to construct therefrom an imagination of the whole scene, which, while it should be true to the scriptural text, should fit as a sequel to *Paradise Lost.* The result was the poem as we now have it—a poem in which the brief scriptural narrative of the Temptation is expanded into four books, and yet the additions and filling-in are consistent with the texts which have suggested them.

So distinctly is *Paradise Regained* a sequel to *Paradise Lost* that acquaintance with *Paradise Lost* is all but presupposed in the reader ere he begins the shorter poem. Such acquaintance, indeed, is not absolutely necessary; but it conduces to a more exact understanding of the total meaning of the poem, and of not a few individual passages in it. Indeed, even that diagram of Universal Space or physical Infinitude which was before the poet's mind, as we have seen, throughout *Paradise Lost* (see our Introduction to that poem), is still present to his mind, though more dimly, in *Paradise Regained.*

The result of Satan's triumph in *Paradise Lost,* it is to be remembered, was that he and his crew of Fallen Angels had succeeded in adding the "orbicular World" of Man, *i.e.* the whole Starry Universe with the Earth at its centre, to that infernal Empire of Hell to which they had been driven down on their expulsion from Heaven or the Empyrean. At the close of the real action of the great epic this is what we find Satan and Sin congratulating themselves upon (Book X. 350—409)—that Man's World has now been wrested from the Empire of Heaven above, and annexed to that of Hell beneath. An inter-communication has been established between Hell and Man's World, and it is hinted that thenceforward the Fallen Angels will not dwell so much in their main dark dominion of Hell as in the more lightsome World overhead, to which access is now easy. Distributing themselves through this World, they will rule its spheres and its elements; but more especially will they congregate in the Air round the central Earth, so as to intermingle with human affairs continually and exercise their diabolic functions on the successive generations of men. They—originally Angels in the Empyreal Heaven, then doomed

spirits in Hell—will now be the "Powers of the Air," round about the Earth, and the Gods of Man's World. So they anticipate, and, over and over again throughout the poem, we are reminded that their anticipation has been fulfilled. What is the theory throughout *Paradise Lost* but that the gods of all the heathen mythologies, worshipped by all the nations, are the Fallen Angels who, in their new condition as Demons of Man's World and Powers of the Air, have so blinded and drugged the perceptions and imaginations of men as to be accepted as divinities?

Well, in *Paradise Regained* all this is assumed. It is assumed that for some thousands of years these "Powers of the Air," *alias* Devils, *alias* gods of the Polytheistic Mythologies, have been in possession of Man's World, distributed some here, some there, according to their characters and faculties of mischief, but occasionally meeting in council somewhere in the element of Air or Mist. Satan is still their chief—the greatest in power and in ability, the leader in their councils, their governor, and the director of their common enterprises. He is no longer quite the same sublime spirit as in the *Paradise Lost*, in whom were to be discerned the majestic lineaments of the Archangel just ruined. The thousands of years he has spent since then in his self-selected function as the devil of our Earth,—no longer flying from star to star and through the grander regions of Universal Space, but winging about constantly close to our Earth, and meddling incessantly with all that is worst in merely terrestrial affairs,—have told upon his nature, and even upon his mien and bearing. He is a meaner, shrewder spirit, both morally and physically less impressive. But he has not yet degenerated into the mere scoffing Mephistopheles of Goethe's great poem. He retains something of his former magnanimity, or at least of his power of understanding and appealing to the higher motives of thought and action. Whatever of really great invention or wisdom remains among the diabolic host in their diffusion through Man's World and its elements is still chiefly lodged in *him*. He it is, accordingly, who, in his vigilance as to what goes on on Earth, is the first to become aware of the advent of one who may possibly be that prophesied "greater Man" who is to retrieve the consequences of Adam's fall, end the diabolic influence in Man's World, and reconnect that World with Heaven. He it is who, as soon as he has made this

discovery, summons the diabolic crew to consultation; and the farther trial of Christ's virtue likewise devolves on him.

The greater portion of the first book of the Poem is preliminary to the real action. It describes the baptism of Christ, when about thirty years of age, and as yet obscure and unknown, by John at Bethabara on the Jordan, the recognition of him by John, the proclamation from Heaven of his Messiahship, the presence of Satan among those who hear this proclamation, and his alarm thereupon. A few days are then supposed to elapse, during which Christ remains in his lodging in Bethabara, the object now of much public regard, and with his first disciples gathering round him; after which he is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, there to revolve his past life, and meditate on the ministry he is about to begin. It is after he has been already forty days in the Desert, and has begun to feel hunger, that the special action of the Poem opens (I. 303). It extends over three days. On the first day (the fortieth, it is to be supposed, of Christ's stay in the Wilderness,) we have Satan's presentation of himself to Christ in the guise of an old peasant, their first discourse, and the commencement of the Temptation in the manner in which it is related both in Matthew and in Luke—to wit, by the suggestion to Christ that he should prove his divinity by turning the stones around him into bread. This part of the relation occupies the remainder of Book I., which ends with a description of the coming on of night in the Desert. In Book II. the relation is resumed—about half the Book being occupied with an episodic account of the preplexity of Mary and the disciples by reason of Christ's mysterious absence, and an account also of a second council of the Evil Spirits to advise with Satan on his farther proceedings; but the remainder of the Book bringing us back to the Desert, where Satan, early in the second day, renews the temptation. This second day's temptation is the most protracted and laborious, and the account of it extends from Book II. through the whole of Book III. and over two-thirds of Book IV. It is here that Milton has allowed his imagination the largest liberty in expanding the brief hints of the scriptural texts. Both in Matthew and in Luke the acts of the Temptation are represented as three. There is the Temptation of the Bread, or the appeal to Christ's hunger, which is put first by both Evangelists; there is the Temptation of

the Vision of the Kingdoms of the Earth from a mountain-top, or the appeal to Christ's ambition—which Luke puts second in order, but Matthew last; and there is the Temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple, or, as it may be called, the appeal to vanity—which Matthew puts second, but Luke last. Milton, assigning a separate day to each act of the Temptation, follows Luke's order rather than Matthew's in the last two acts, and devotes the second day to the appeal to Christ's ambition. But he adds a variety of circumstances. He begins the day, for example, with a repetition of the hunger-temptation of the previous day, and then passes on to subtle appeals to the higher appetites of wealth and power, so as to prepare the way for the vision of the Kingdoms of the Earth from the mountain-top. Milton's management of this vision (which begins at line 251 of Book III. and extends to line 393 of Book IV.) has hardly met with sufficient admiration. He contrives to make it not only a splendid, but also a most accurate, general view of the political condition of the earth at the time referred to, when the Parthians in the East and the Romans in the West were the great rival powers that had swamped all others; and by thus supposing Satan to have based his temptation on the actual state of the world, and a calculation of what might be done by the genius of a bold adventurer striking in, at that particular juncture, between the Romans and the Parthians, he imparts to it a character of high Machiavellian ability. But the Temptation passes into still a new vein at the close, where, the direct appeal to political ambition having failed, Satan, with Athens in view, instead of Rome, tries to work on the passion for purely intellectual distinction. This too failing, the second day's temptation is at an end, and there is the return from the mountain-top to the wilderness, where Christ is left alone during a night of storm and ghastliness. There remains then only the final act of the Temptation, reserved for the third day—the temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple. Although Milton has also put his own interpretation on this portion of the Temptation, working up to the actual transportation of Christ to the pinnacle, and the challenge of his power there, by previous questionings of Satan whether, after all, he is the "Son of God" in any very extraordinary sense, yet a comparatively brief space suffices both for the discourse leading up to the incident and for the incident itself. The third day's temptation, indeed, encroaching

only a little on that day, and not protracted over the whole of it, occupies only about the last third of Book IV. One sees, at the close of the poem, why Milton preferred Luke's arrangement of the three acts of the Temptation to Matthew's. The reservation of the incident on the pinnacle of the Temple to the last enables the poet to close with that fine visual effect of Christ standing alone on the pinnacle, after Satan's inglorious fall, till the fiery globe of ministering Angels surround him, and bear him in safety to earth on their wings as on a floating couch. Down they bear him to a flowery valley, and to the celestial food spread out for him there; he refreshes himself therewith while the Angels above sing a hymn of his victory and its consequences; then, rising, he finds his way unobserved to his mother's house.

Speaking of *Paradise Regained*, Milton's nephew, Phillips, says (Life of Milton, 1694): "It is generally censured to be much "inferior to the other (*i.e.* to *Paradise Lost*), though he (Milton) "could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him." Tradition, as usual, has exaggerated this statement, until now the current assertion is that Milton preferred *Paradise Regained* to *Paradise Lost.* We may safely say that he knew better than to do any such thing. But, probably, in that "general censure" of the inferiority of the smaller poem, which had begun, according to Phillips, even during the three years that were spared Milton to note its reception, he discovered critical misconceptions which have transmitted themselves to our time. "Is *Paradise Regained* complete or not?" is a question on which a good deal has been written by Peck, Warburton, Newton, and others. The sole reason for thinking that it is incomplete, and that possibly the four books of the Poem as it now stands were originally intended only as part of a much larger poem, is founded on the smallness of that portion of Christ's life which is embraced in the poem, and on the stopping short of that consummation which would have completed the antithesis to *Paradise Lost*—*i.e.* the expulsion of Satan and his crew out of the human World altogether back to Hell. This objection has already been discussed, and found invalid. By no protraction of the poem over the rest of Christ's life, we may also remark, could Milton have brought the story to the consummation thought desirable. The *virtual* deliverance of the World from the power of Satan and his crew may be represented as achieved in

Christ's life on earth, and Milton represents it as achieved in Christ's first encounter with Satan at the outset of his ministry; but the *actual* or *physical* expulsion of the Evil Spirits out of their usurped world into their own nether realm was left a matter of prophecy or promise, and was certainly not regarded by Milton as having accomplished even at the time when he wrote. Such completion of the poem, therefore, as could be given to it by working it on to this historical consummation, was impossible. But, in short, by publishing the poem as it stands, Milton certified its completeness according to his own idea of the theme.——"Well, then," some of the critics continue, raising a second question, "can the poem properly be called an epic?" They have in view the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Æneid, as the types of epics; and, allowing that *Paradise Lost* may rank as also an epic, they think *Paradise Regained* too short and too simple for such a name. But Milton had anticipated the objection as early as 1641, when, in his *Reason of Church-Government*, speaking of his literary schemes, he had discriminated two kinds of epics, of which he might have the option if he should ultimately determine on the epic form of composition as the best for his genius. "That epick form," he had said, "whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of "Virgil and Tasso are a *diffuse*, and the Book of Job a *brief* model." May we not say that, whereas in *Paradise Lost* he had adopted the larger or more diffuse of the two models of epic here described, so in *Paradise Regained* he had in view rather the smaller or briefer model? This would put the matter on its right footing. *Paradise Regained* is a different poem from *Paradise Lost*—not so great, because not admitting of being so great; but it is as good in its different kind. The difference of kinds between the two poems is even signalized in certain differences in the language and versification. *Paradise Regained* seems written more hurriedly than *Paradise Lost*, and, though with passages of great beauty, with less avoidance of plain historical phrases, and less care to give to all the effect of continued song.

PARADISE REGAINED

A POEM IN FOUR BOOKS.

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON.

PARADISE REGAINED.

THE FIRST BOOK.

I, WHO erewhile the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness.
Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute,
And bear through highth or depth of Nature's bounds,
With prosperous wing full summed, to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age:
Worthy to have not remained so long unsung.
Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptized. To his great baptism flocked

With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deemed
To the flood Jordan—came as then obscure,
Unmarked, unknown. But him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warned, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resigned
To him his heavenly office. Nor was long
His witness unconfirmed: on him baptized
Heaven opened, and in likeness of a dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heaven pronounced him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who, roving still
About the world, at that assembly famed
Would not be last, and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man to whom
Such high attest was given a while surveyed
With wonder; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved,
A gloomy consistory; and then amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake:—
"O ancient Powers of Air and this wide World
(For much more willingly I mention Air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation), well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This Universe we have possessed, and ruled
In manner at our will the affairs of Earth,
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceived by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heaven

Delay, for longest time to Him is short;
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threatened wound
(At least, if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infringed, our freedom and our being
In this fair empire won of Earth and Air)—
For this ill news I bring: The Woman's Seed,
Destined to this, is late of woman born.
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause;
But his growth now to youth's full flower, displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their King. All come,
And he himself among them was baptized—
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw
The Prophet do him reverence; on him, rising
Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors; thence on his head
A perfect dove descend (whate'er it meant);
And out of Heaven the sovran voice I heard,
'This is my Son beloved,—in him am pleased.'
His mother, then, is mortal, but his Sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven;
And what will He not do to advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,

When his fierce thunder drove us to the Deep;
Who this is we must learn, for Man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be opposed
(Not force, but well-couched fraud, well-woven snares),
Ere in the head of nations he appear,
Their king, their leader, and supreme on Earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and the exploit performed
Successfully: a calmer voyage now
Will waft me; and the way found prosperous once
Induces best to hope of like success."
He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to the infernal crew,
Distracted and surprised with deep dismay
At these sad tidings. But no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him, their great Dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thrive
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea gods,
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try—

So to subvert whom he suspected raised
To end his reign on Earth so long enjoyed:
But, contrary, unweeting he fulfilled
The purposed counsel, pre-ordained and fixed,
Of the Most High, who, in full frequence bright
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake:—
"Gabriel, this day, by proof, thou shalt behold,
Thou and all Angels conversant on Earth
With Man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and called the Son of God.
Then told'st her, doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O'ershadow her. This Man, born and now upgrown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan; let him tempt, and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostasy. He might have learnt
Less overweening, since he failed in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man,
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell—
Winning by conquest what the first man lost
By fallacy surprised. But first I mean
To exercise him in the Wilderness;
There he shall first lay down the rudiments

Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes.
By humiliation and strong sufferance
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
That all the Angels and ethereal Powers—
They now, and men hereafter—may discern
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit called my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men."
So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space; then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved,
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:—
"Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles!
The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,
And, devilish machinations, come to nought!"
So they in Heaven their odes and vigils tuned.
Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptized,
Musing and much revolving in his breast
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his godlike office now mature,
One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude, till, far from track of men,

Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He entered now the bordering Desert wild,
And, with dark shades and rocks environed round,
His holy meditations thus pursued:—
"O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compared!
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things. Therefore, above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet;
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection that, ere yet my age
Had measured twice six years, at our great Feast
I went into the Temple, there to hear
The teachers of our Law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own,
And was admired by all. Yet this not all
To which my spirit aspired. Victorious deeds
Flamed in my heart, heroic acts—one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restored:
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
Not wilfully misdoing, but unware

Misled; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,
And said to me apart, 'High are thy thoughts,
O Son! but nourish them, and let them soar
To what highth sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man;
Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
Thy Father is the Eternal King who rules
All Heaven and Earth, Angels and sons of men.
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceived in me a virgin; he foretold
Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end.
At thy nativity a glorious quire
Of Angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him; and to thee they came,
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st;
For in the inn was left no better room.
A star, not seen before, in heaven appearing,
Guided the wise men thither from the East,
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold;
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star, new-graven in heaven,
By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warned
By vision, found thee in the Temple, and spake,
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood.'
This having heard, straight I again revolved

The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
I am—this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay, even to the death,
Ere I the promised kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
Full weight must be transferred upon my head.
Yet, neither thus disheartened or dismayed,
The time prefixed I waited; when behold
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah, and his way prepare!
I, as all others, to his baptism came,
Which I believed was from above; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed
Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven)—
Me him whose harbinger he was; and first
Refused on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won.
But, as I rose out of the laving stream,
Heaven opened her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a dove;
And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heaven, pronounced me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleased: by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
The authority which I derived from Heaven.
And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this wilderness; to what intent
I learn not yet. Perhaps I need not know;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals."

So spake our Morning Star, then in his rise,
And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades.
The way he came, not having marked return,
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodged in his breast as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he passed—whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak
Or cedar to defend him from the dew,
Or harboured in one cave, is not revealed;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt,
Till those days ended; hungered then at last
Among wild beasts. They at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed; his walk
The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm;
The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet returned from field at eve,
He saw approach; who first with curious eye
Perused him, then with words thus uttered spake:—
"Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place,
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan? for single none
Durst ever, who returned, and dropt not here
His carcass, pined with hunger and with droughth.
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man whom late

Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honoured so, and called thee Son
Of God. I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, constrained by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new; fame also finds us out."
To whom the Son of God:—"Who brought me hither
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek."
"By miracle he may," replied the swain;
"What other way I see not; for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inured
More than the camel, and to drink go far—
Men to much misery and hardship born.
But, if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste."
He ended, and the Son of God replied:—
"Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st),
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
Our fathers here with manna? In the Mount
Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank;
And forty days Eliah without food
Wandered this barren waste; the same I now.
Why dost thou, then, suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who *thou* art?"
Whom thus answered the Arch-Fiend, now undisguised:—
"'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate
Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driven
With them from bliss to the bottomless Deep—

Yet to that hideous place not so confined
By rigour unconniving but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of Earth,
Or range in the Air; nor from the Heaven of Heavens
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came, among the Sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job,
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;
And, when to all his Angels he proposed
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud,
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibbed with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge:
For what he bids I do. Though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be beloved of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire,
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous; I should so have lost all sense.
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declared the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind. Why should I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence. By them
I lost not what I lost; rather by them
I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell
Copartner in these regions of the World,
If not disposer—lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,

Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy, they say, excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe!
At first it may be; but, long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load;
Small consolation, then, were Man adjoined.
This wounds me most (what can it less?) that Man,
Man fallen, shall be restored, I never more."
  To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied:—
"Deservedly thou griev'st, composed of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end,
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heaven of Heavens. Thou com'st, indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendour, now deposed,
Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
To all the host of Heaven. The happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy—
Rather inflames thy torment, representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable;
So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.
But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King!
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.

Yet thou pretend'st to truth! all oracles
By thee are given, and what confessed more true
Among the nations? That hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers? what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who asked have seldom understood,
And, not well understood, as good not known?
Who ever, by consulting at thy shrine,
Returned the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly or follow what concerned him most,
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
For God hath justly given the nations up
To thy delusions; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous. But, when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence,
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from him, or his Angels president
In every province, who, themselves disdaining
To approach thy temples, give thee in command
What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say
To thy adorers? Thou, with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st;
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceased,
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
Shalt be inquired at Delphos or elsewhere—
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his living Oracle
Into the world to teach his final will,
And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell

In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know."
  So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned:—
  "Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urged me hard with doings which not will,
But misery, hath wrested from me. Where
Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforced oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art placed above me; thou art Lord;
From thee I can, and must, submiss, endure
Check or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to the ear,
And tunable as sylvan pipe or song;
What wonder, then, if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire
Virtue who follow not her lore. Permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes),
And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsafed his voice
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspired: disdain not such access to me."
  To whom our Saviour, with unaltered brow:—
"Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not, or forbid. Do as thou find'st
Permission from above; thou canst not more."

He added not; and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappeared,
Into thin air diffused: for now began
Night with her sullen wing to double-shade
The desert; fowls in their clay nests were couched;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

PARADISE REGAINED.

THE SECOND BOOK.

MEANWHILE the new-baptized, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly called
Jesus Messiah, Son of God, declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged—I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in Holy Writ not named—
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
So lately found and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And, as the days increased, increased their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the Mount and missing long,
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.
Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Eliah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara—in Jericho
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
Machærus, and each town or city walled
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Peræa—but returned in vain.

Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
Plain fishermen (no greater men them call),
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints outbreathed:—
"Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
Unlooked for are we fallen! Our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.
'Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand;
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored:'
Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
Into perplexity and new amaze.
For whither is he gone? what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth; the time is come.
Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress
Thy Chosen, to what highth their power unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of Thee; arise, and vindicate
Thy glory; free thy people from their yoke!
But let us wait; thus far He hath performed—
Sent his Anointed, and to us revealed him,
By his great Prophet pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have conversed.
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence; He will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall—
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence:
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return."
Thus they out of their plaints new hope resume

To find whom at the first they found unsought.
But to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others returned from baptism, not her Son,
Nor left at Jordan tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:—
"Oh, what avails me now that honour high,
To have conceived of God, or that salute,
'Hail, highly favoured, among women blest!'
While I to sorrows am no less advanced,
And fears as eminent above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore:
In such a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtained to shelter him or me
From the bleak air? A stable was our warmth,
A manger his; yet soon enforced to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and, missing, filled
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem.
From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years; his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king. But now,
Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
Son owned from Heaven by his Father's voice,
I looked for some great change. To honour? no;
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel, and to a sign
Spoken against—that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce. This is my favoured lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high!

Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest!
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? Some great intent
Conceals him. When twelve years he scarce had seen,
I lost him, but so found as well I saw
He could not lose himself, but went about
His Father's business. What he meant I mused—
Since understand; much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inured;
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events."

Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had passed
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling:
The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set—
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on Earth, and mission high.
For Satan, with sly preface to return,
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his Potentates in council sat.
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank, he thus began:—

"Princes, Heaven's ancient Sons, Ethereal Thrones—
Demonian Spirits now, from the element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called
Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath
(So may we hold our place and these mild seats
Without new trouble!)—such an enemy

Is risen to invade us, who no less
Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell.
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequence was empowered,
Have found him, viewed him, tasted him; but find
Far other labour to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men,
Though Adam by his wife's allurement fell,
However to this Man inferior far—
If he be Man by mother's side, at least
With more than human gifts from Heaven adorned,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am returned, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here. I summon all
Rather to be in readiness with hand
Or counsel to assist, lest I, who erst
Thought none my equal, now be overmatched."
  So spake the old Serpent, doubting, and from all
With clamour was assured their utmost aid
At his command; when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolutest Spirit that fell,
The sensualest, and, after Asmodai,
The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advised:—
  "Set women in his eye and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found.
Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky, more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allayed, yet terrible to approach,

Skilled to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the power to soften and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolutest breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow, to the gods of his wives."
  To whom quick answer Satan thus returned:—
"Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself. Because of old
Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
Before the Flood, thou, with thy lusty crew,
False titled Sons of God, roaming the Earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain-side,
In valley or green meadow, to waylay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amymone, Syrinx, many more
Too long—then lay'st thy scapes on names adored,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
Satyr, or Faun, or Silvan? But these haunts
Delight not all. Among the sons of men
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned

All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the East
He slightly viewed, and slightly overpassed;
How he surnamed of Africa dismissed,
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon, he lived at ease, and, full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aimed not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state;
Thence to the bait of women lay exposed.
But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire? Or should she, confident,
As sitting queen adored on Beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove (so fables tell),
How would one look from his majestic brow,
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
Discountenance her despised, and put to rout
All her array, her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe! For Beauty stands
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease to admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abashed.
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy—with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise
(Rocks whereon greatest men have oftest wrecked);

Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond.
And now I know he hungers, where no food
Is to be found, in the wide Wilderness:
The rest commit to me; I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."
He ceased, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits likest to himself in guile,
To be at hand and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part;
Then to the desert takes with these his flight,
Where still, from shade to shade, the Son of God,
After forty days' fasting, had remained,
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said:—
"Where will this end? Four times ten days I have passed
Wandering this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite. That fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here. If nature need not,
Or God support nature without repast,
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
But now I feel I hunger; which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks. Yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain. So it remain
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of famine fear no harm;
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed
Me hungering more to do my Father's will."
It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Communed in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh

Of trees thick interwoven. There he slept,
And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks; nature's refreshment sweet.
Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing even and morn—
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought;
He saw the Prophet also, how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper—then how, awaked,
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night; and now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry
The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song.
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream;
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.
Up to a hill anon his steps he reared,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw—
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud.
Thither he bent his way, determined there
To rest at noon, and entered soon the shade
High-roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That opened in the midst a woody scene;
Nature's own work it seemed (Nature taught Art),
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt

Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs. He viewed it round;
When suddenly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city or court or palace bred,
And with fair speech these words to him addressed:—
"With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide,
Of all things destitute, and, well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness:
The fugitive bond-woman, with her son,
Outcast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing Angel; all the race
Of Israel here had famished, had not God
Rained from heaven manna; and that Prophet bold,
Native of Thebez, wandering here, was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed."
To whom thus Jesus:—"What conclud'st thou hence?
They all had need; I, as thou seest, have none."
"How hast thou hunger then?" Satan replied.
"Tell me, if food were now before thee set,
Would'st thou not eat?" "Thereafter as I like
The giver," answered Jesus. "Why should that
Cause thy refusal?" said the subtle Fiend.
"Hast thou not right to all created things?
Owe not all creatures, by just right, to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power? Nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, or offered first
To idols—those young Daniel could refuse;
Nor proffered by an enemy—though who

Would scruple that, with want oppressed? Behold,
Nature ashamed, or, better to express,
Troubled, that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed
From all the elements her choicest store,
To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
With honour. Only deign to sit and eat."
He spake no dream; for, as his words had end,
Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld,
In ample space under the broadest shade,
A table richly spread in regal mode,
With dishes piled and meats of noblest sort
And savour—beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Grisamber-steamed; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
Alas! how simple, to these cates compared,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!
And at a stately sideboard, by the wine,
That fragrant smell diffused, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich-clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas; distant more,
Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood,
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
Of faery damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings or charming pipes; and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fanned

From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
Such was the splendour; and the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renewed:—
"What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict
Defends the touching of these viands pure;
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroy's life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.
What doubt'st thou, Son of God? Sit down and eat."
To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:—
"Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my power that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
Arrayed in glory, on my cup to attend:
Why shouldst thou, then, obtrude this diligence
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles."
To whom thus answered Satan, malecontent:—
"That I have also power to give thou seest;
If of that power I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it? But I see

What I can do or offer is suspect.
Of these things others quickly will dispose,
Whose pains have earned the far-fet spoil." With that
Both table and provision vanished quite,
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard;
Only the importune Tempter still remained,
And with these words his temptation pursued:—
"By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harmed, therefore not moved;
Thy temperance, invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite;
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions. But wherewith to be achieved?
Great acts require great means of enterprise;
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit.
Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
To greatness? whence authority deriv'st?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.
What raised Antipater the Edomite,
And his son Herod placed on Judah's throne,
Thy throne, but gold, that got him puissant friends?
Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap—
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me.
Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want."
To whom thus Jesus patiently replied:—

"Yet wealth without these three is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gained—
Witness those ancient empires of the earth,
In highth of all their flowing wealth dissolved;
But men endued with these have oft attained,
In lowest poverty, to highest deeds—
Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
Among the Heathen (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember
Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?
For I esteem those names of men so poor,
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
Riches, though offered from the hand of kings.
And what in me seems wanting but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
Extol not riches, then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare; more apt
To slacken virtue and abate her edge
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms! Yet not for that a crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights,
To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the public all this weight he bears.
Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules

Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king—
Which every wise and virtuous man attains;
And who attains not ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and, knowing, worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly. This attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force—which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.
Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless, then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought—
To gain a sceptre, oftest better missed."

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

PARADISE REGAINED.

THE THIRD BOOK.

SO spake the Son of God; and Satan stood
A while as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted and convinced
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift;
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renewed, him thus accosts:—
"I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
Thy actions to thy words accord; thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due; thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast, or tongue of Seers old
Infallible; or, wert thou sought to deeds
That might require the array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.
These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide?
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness, wherefore deprive
All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself

The fame and glory—glory, the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected spirits, most tempered pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers, all but the highest?
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe. The son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quelled
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflamed
With glory, wept that he had lived so long
Inglorious. But thou yet art not too late."
  To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied:—
"Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmixed?
And what the people but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and, well weighed, scarce worth the praise?
They praise and they admire they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extolled,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk?
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise—
His lot who dares be singularly good.
The intelligent among them and the wise

Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.
This is true glory and renown—when God,
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises. Thus he did to Job,
When, to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,
As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,
He asked thee, 'Hast thou seen my servant Job?'
Famous he was in Heaven; on Earth less known,
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
They err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault. What do these worthies
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy;
Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deformed,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But, if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attained,
Without ambition, war, or violence—
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance. I mention still

Him whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
Made famous in a land and times obscure;
Who names not now with honour patient Job?
Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable?)
By what he taught and suffered for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
Yet, if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught suffered—if young African for fame
His wasted country freed from Punic rage—
The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I seek glory, then, as vain men seek,
Oft not deserved? I seek not mine, but His
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am."
  To whom the Tempter, murmuring, thus replied:—
"Think not so slight of glory, therein least
Resembling thy great Father. He seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs; nor content in Heaven,
By all his Angels glorified, requires
Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption.
Above all sacrifice, or hallowed gift,
Glory he requires, and glory he receives,
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declared;
From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts."
  To whom our Saviour fervently replied:—
"And reason; since his Word all things produced,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely; of whom what could he less expect

Than glory and benediction—that is, thanks—
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else,
And, not returning that, would likeliest render
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence!
But why should man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame—
Who, for so many benefits received,
Turned recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoiled;
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs?
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance."
  So spake the Son of God; and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin—for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all;
Yet of another plea bethought him soon:—
  "Of glory, as thou wilt," said he, "so deem;
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.
But to a Kingdom thou art born—ordained
To sit upon thy father David's throne,
By mother's side thy father, though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms.
Judæa now and all the Promised Land,
Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius, nor is always ruled
With temperate sway: oft have they violated

The Temple, oft the Law, with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus. And think'st thou to regain
Thy right in sitting still, or thus retiring?
So did not Machabeus. He indeed
Retired unto the Desert, but with arms;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevailed
That by strong hand his family obtained,
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurped,
With Modin and her suburbs once content.
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty—zeal and duty are not slow,
But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait:
They themselves rather are occasion best—
Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
Thy country from her heathen servitude.
So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify,
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign—
The happier reign the sooner it begins.
Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?"
  To whom our Saviour answer thus returned:—
"All things are best fulfilled in their due time;
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said.
If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told
That it shall never end, so, when begin
The Father in his purpose hath decreed—
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
Without distrust or doubt, that He may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best

Can suffer best can do, best reign who first
Well hath obeyed—just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it *thee* when I begin
My everlasting Kingdom? Why art *thou*
Solicitous? What moves *thy* inquisition?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?"
  To whom the Tempter, inly racked, replied:—
"Let that come when it comes. All hope is lost
Of my reception into grace; what worse?
For where no hope is left is left no fear.
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst; worst is my port,
My harbour, and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever, for itself condemned,
And will alike be punished, whether thou
Reign or reign not—though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell)
A shelter and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I, then, to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best?
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,
That thou, who worthiest art, shouldst be their king!
Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detained
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!

No wonder; for, though in thee be united
What of perfection can in Man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem few days'
Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts—
Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever
Timorous and loth, with novice modesty
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous.
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state—
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,
And regal mysteries; that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand."
  With that (such power was given him then), he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain outstretched in circuit wide
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flowed,
The one winding, the other straight, and left between
Fair champaign, with less rivers interveined,
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea.
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine;
With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high-towered, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large

The prospect was that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain-top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began:—
"Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest, and field, and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league. Here thou behold'st
Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds,
Araxes and the Caspian lake; thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,
And, inaccessible, the Arabian drouth:
Here, Nineveh, of length within her wall
Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis,
His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there;
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings; of later fame,
Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye, thou may'st behold.
All these the Parthian (now some ages past
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That empire) under his dominion holds,

From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gathered all his host
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste. See, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit—
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings."
He looked, and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates outpoured, light-armed troops
In coats of mail and military pride.
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound—
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana, to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales;
From Atropatia, and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.
He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheeled, and flying behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown.
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor, on each horn,
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers
Of archers; nor of labouring pioneers

A multitude, with spades and axes armed,
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke:
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican, with all his northern powers,
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry;
At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presumed,
And to our Saviour thus his words renewed:—
"That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety, hear and mark
To what end I have brought thee hither, and show
All this fair sight. Thy kingdom, though foretold
By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
Endeavour, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain: prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means;
Without means used, what it predicts revokes.
But say thou wert possessed of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure
Between two such enclosing enemies,
Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own: the Parthian first,
By my advice, as nearer, and of late

Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
Antigonus and old Hyrcanus, bound,
Maugre the Roman. It shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose,
Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league.
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinstall thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor—
Deliverance of thy brethren, those Ten Tribes
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve
In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed:
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
This offer sets before thee to deliver.
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond,
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear."
  To whom our Saviour answered thus, unmoved:—
"Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set, and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
Means I must use, thou say'st; prediction else
Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne!
My time, I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off), is not yet come.
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack

On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me—argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those Ten Tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons!
But whence to *thee* this zeal? Where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numbering Israel—which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days' pestilence? Such was thy zeal
To Israel then, the same that now to me.
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
And all the idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers, but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain,
And God with idols in their worship joined.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,
Headlong would follow, and to their gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan? No; let them serve
Their enemies who serve idols with God.

Yet He at length, time to himself best known,
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the Promised Land their fathers passed;
To his due time and providence I leave them."
So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

PARADISE REGAINED.

THE FOURTH BOOK.

PERPLEXED and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little here, nay lost. But Eve was Eve;
This far his over-match, who, self-deceived
And rash, beforehand had no better weighed
The strength he was to cope with, or his own.
But—as a man who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reached where least he thought,
To salve his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is poured,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dashed, the assault renew,
(Vain battery!) and in froth or bubbles end—
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.

He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in·breadth not wide,
Washed by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length backed with a ridge of hills
That screened the fruits of the earth and seats of men
From cold Septentrion blasts; thence in the midst
Divided by a river, off whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens and groves, presented to his eyes
Above the highth of mountains interposed—
By what strange parallax, or optic skill
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to inquire.
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke:—
"The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
Of nations. There the Capitol thou seest,
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable; and there Mount Palatine,
The imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires.
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods—so well I have disposed
My aery microscope—thou may'st behold,
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs

Carved work, the hand of famed artificers
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in:
Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power;
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings;
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Æmilian—some from farthest south,
Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe, Nilotic isle, and, more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor sea;
From the Asian kings (and Parthian among these),
From India and the Golden Chersoness,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed,
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west;
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
All nations now to Rome obedience pay—
To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain,
In ample territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shared among petty kings too far removed;
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This Emperor hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
To Capreæ, an island small but strong

On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy;
Committing to a wicked favourite
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious;
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne,
Now made a sty, and, in his place ascending,
A victor-people free from servile yoke!
And with my help thou may'st; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim, therefore, at no less than all the world;
Aim at the highest; without the highest attained,
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophesied what will."
  To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied:—
"Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though called magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind; though thou should'st add to tell
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read),
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, embossed with gems
And studs of pearl—to me should'st tell, who thirst
And hunger still. Then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh! What honour that,
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries? Then proceed'st to talk
Of the Emperor, how easily subdued,

How gloriously. I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster: what if I withal
Expel a Devil who first made him such?
Let his tormentor, Conscience, find him out;
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people, victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal—who, once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquered well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed;
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world;
And of my kingdom there shall be no end.
Means there shall be to this; but what the means
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."
  To whom the Tempter, impudent, replied:—
"I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valuest, because offered, and reject'st.
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict.
On the other side know also thou that I
On what I offer set as high esteem,

Nor what I part with mean to give for naught.
All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,
The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give
(For, given to me, I give to whom I please),
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else—
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior lord
(Easily done), and hold them all of me;
For what can less so great a gift deserve?"
  Whom thus our Saviour answered with disdain:—
"I never liked thy talk, thy offers less;
Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition.
But I endure the time, till which expired
Thou hast permission on me. It is written,
The first of all commandments, 'Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only Him shalt serve;'
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee, accursed? now more accursed
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous; which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given!
Permitted rather, and by thee usurped;
Other donation none thou canst produce.
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
God over all supreme? If given to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid! But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame
As offer them to me, the Son of God—
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God?
Get thee behind me! Plain thou now appear'st
That Evil One, Satan for ever damned."

To whom the Fiend, with fear abashed, replied:—
"Be not so sore offended, Son of God—
Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men—
If I, to try whether in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title, have proposed
What both from Men and Angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of Fire, Air, Flood, and on the Earth
Nations besides from all the quartered winds—
God of this World invoked, and World beneath.
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me most fatal, me it most concerns.
The trial hath indamaged thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem;
Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not.
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute;
As by that early action may be judged,
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
Alone into the Temple, there wast found
Among the gravest Rabbies, disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day. Be famous, then,
By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge; all things in it comprehend.
All knowledge is not couched in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote;
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light;

And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st.
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is best evinced.
Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
Westward, much nearer by south-west; behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil—
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
See there the olive-grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There, flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whispering stream. Within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages—his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there; and painted Stoa next.
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer called,
Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave Tragedians taught
In chorus or iambic, teachers best

Of moral prudence, with delight received
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
High actions and high passions best describing.
Thence to the famous Orators repair,
Those ancient whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democraty,
Shook the Arsenal, and fulmined over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
From heaven descended to the low-roofed house
Of Socrates—see there his tenement—
Whom, well inspired, the oracle pronounced
Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams, that watered all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe.
These here revolve, or, as thou likest, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire joined."
  To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied:—
"Think not but that I know these things; or, think
I know them not, not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought. He who receives
Light from above, from the Fountain of Light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all professed
To know this only, that he nothing knew;
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits;
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;

Others in virtue placed felicity,
But virtue joined with riches and long life;
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease;
The Stoic last in philosophic pride,
By him called virtue, and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life—
Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can;
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the World began, and how Man fell,
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry;
And in themselves seek virtue; and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none;
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who, therefore, seeks in these
True wisdom finds her not, or, by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.

Or, if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace? All our Law and Story strewed
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts derived—
Ill imitated while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own,
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets, thick-laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is praised aright and godlike men,
The Holiest of Holies and his Saints
(Such are from God inspired, not such from thee);
Unless where moral virtue is expressed
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st as those
The top of eloquence—statists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
These only, with our Law, best form a king."

So spake the Son of God; but Satan, now
Quite at a loss (for all his darts were spent),
Thus to our Saviour, with stern brow, replied:—
"Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor empire, pleases thee, nor aught
By me proposed in life contemplative
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world? The Wilderness
For thee is fittest place: I found thee there,
And thither will return thee. Yet remember
What I foretell thee; soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
Nicely or cautiously, my offered aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,
When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
Now, contrary—if I read aught in heaven,
Or heaven write aught of fate—by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters
In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate,
Attends thee; scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and, lastly, cruel death.
A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric, I discern not;
Nor when: eternal sure—as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefixed
Directs me in the starry rubric set."
So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expired), and to the Wilderness
Brought back, the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in louring Night,

Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day.
Our Saviour, meek, and with untroubled mind
After his aery jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms thick-intertwined might shield
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head;
But, sheltered, slept in vain; for at his head
The Tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturbed his sleep. And either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven; the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive poured
Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire
In ruin reconciled; nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken! Nor yet staid the terror there:
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environed thee; some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace.
Thus passed the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice gray,
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had raised
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.

And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Cleared up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The Prince of Darkness; glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came;
Yet with no new device (they all were spent),
Rather by this his last affront resolved,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite to be so oft repelled.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Backed on the north and west by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said:—
"Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night. I heard the wrack,
As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them,
As dangerous to the pillared frame of Heaven,
Or to the Earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone.
Yet, as being ofttimes noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill.

This tempest at this desert most was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offered with my aid
To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David's throne no man knows when
(For both the when and how is nowhere told),
Thou shalt be what thou art ordained, no doubt;
For Angels have proclaimed it, but concealing
The time and means? Each act is rightliest done
Not when it must, but when it may be best.
If thou observe not this, be sure to find
What I foretold thee—many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold;
Whereof this ominous night that closed thee round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies,
May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign."
So talked he, while the Son of God went on,
And staid not, but in brief him answered thus:—
"Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm
Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none.
I never feared they could, though noising loud
And threatening nigh: what they can do as signs
Betokening or ill-boding I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offered aid, that I, accepting,
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious Spirit! and would'st be thought my God;
And storm'st, refused, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will! Desist (thou art discerned,
And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest."

To whom the Fiend, now swoln with rage, replied:—
"Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born!
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the Prophets; of thy birth, at length
Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceased to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
Till, at the ford of Jordan, whither all
Flocked to the Baptist, I among the rest
(Though not to be baptized), by voice from Heaven
Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art called
The Son of God, which bears no single sense.
The Son of God I also am, or was;
And, if I was, I am; relation stands:
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declared.
Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that hour,
And followed thee still on to this waste wild,
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
Good reason, then, if I beforehand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent;
By parle or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can.
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee

Proof against all temptation, as a rock
Of adamant and as a centre, firm
To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
Have been before contemned, and may again.
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heaven,
Another method I must now begin."
So saying, he caught him up, and, without wing
Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain,
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The Holy City, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires:
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn:—
"There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill. I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee, and highest placed: highest is best.
Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down. Safely, if Son of God;
For it is written, 'He will give command
Concerning thee to his Angels; in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'"
To whom thus Jesus: "Also it is written,
'Tempt not the Lord thy God.'" He said, and stood;
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.
As when Earth's son, Antæus (to compare
Small things with greatest), in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and, oft foiled, still rose,

Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length in the air expired and fell,
So, after many a foil, the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall;
And, as that Theban monster that proposed
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devoured,
That once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep,
So, strook with dread and anguish, fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hoped success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell; and straight a fiery globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumy vans received Him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air;
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits fetched from the Tree of Life,
And from the Fount of Life ambrosial drink,
That soon refreshed him wearied, and repaired
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired,
Or thirst; and, as he fed, Angelic quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the Tempter proud:—
"True Image of the Father, whether throned
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or, remote from Heaven, enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle and human form,

Wandering the wilderness—whatever place,
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with Godlike force endued
Against the attempter of thy Father's throne
And thief of Paradise! Him long of old
Thou didst debel, and down from Heaven cast
With all his army; now thou hast avenged
Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke.
For, though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
A Saviour, art come down to reinstall;
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, Infernal Serpent! shalt not long
Rule in the clouds. Like an autumnal star,
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heaven, trod down
Under his feet. For proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound)
By this repulse received, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph; in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God. He, all unarmed,
Shall chase thee, with the terror of his voice,
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul—
Thee and thy legions; yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the Deep,
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both Worlds,

Queller of Satan! On thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save Mankind."
  Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refreshed,
Brought on his way with joy. He, unobserved,
Home to his mother's house private returned.

THE END.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

INTRODUCTION

TO

SAMSON AGONISTES.

MILTON is remembered mainly as an epic poet. But his final choice of the epic form for his greatest poem and its companion was the result of deliberation. Apparently it was even a departure from his original inclination, when in his early manhood he had debated with himself in what form of poetry his genius would have fullest scope. Two of his early English poems had not only been dramatic, but had actually been performed. The *Arcades* was "part of an entertainment presented to the Countess-Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some noble persons of her family," probably in the year 1634; and *Comus*, the finest and most extensive of all Milton's minor poems, was nothing else than an elaborate "masque," performed, in the same year, at Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales, by way of an entertainment to the gentry of the neighbourhood. (See Introductions to these two Poems.) Whether Milton was present at the performance of either the *Arcades* or the *Comus* is not known; but the fact of his writing two such dramatic pieces for actual performance by the members of a family with which he had relations of acquaintance shows that at that time—*i.e.* when he was twenty-six years of age—he had no objection to this kind of entertainment, then so fashionable at Court and among noble families of literary tastes. That he had seen masques performed—masques of Ben Jonson, Carew, or Shirley—may be taken for granted; and we have his own assurance that, when at Cambridge,

he attended dramatic representations there, got up in the colleges, and that, when in London, during his vacations from Cambridge, he used to go to the theatres (*Eleg.* i. 29–46). To the same effect we have his lines in *L'Allegro*, where he includes the theatre among the natural pleasures of the mind in its cheerful mood—

> "Then to the well-trod stage anon,
> If Jonson's learned sock be on,
> Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild"—

words which, so far as Milton's appreciation of Shakespeare is concerned, would seem poor, if we did not recollect the splendid lines which he had previously written (1630), and which were prefixed to the second folio edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1632—

> "What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
> The labour of an age in pilèd stones,
> Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
> Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
> Dear Son of Memory, great heir of Fame,
> What need'st thou such weak witness," &c.

Still the unlawfulness of dramatic entertainments had always been a tenet of those stricter English Puritans with whom Milton even then felt a political sympathy; and Prynne's famous *Histriomastix*, in which he denounced stage-plays and all connected with them through a thousand quarto pages (1632), had helped to confirm Puritanism in this tenet. As Prynne's treatise had been out more than a year before the *Arcades* and *Comus* were written, it is clear that he had not converted Milton to his opinion. While the more rigid and less educated of the Puritans undoubtedly went with Prynne in condemning the stage altogether, Milton, I should say, before the time of his journey to Italy (1638–39), was one of those who retained a pride in the drama as the form of literature in which, for two generations, English genius had been most productive. Lamenting, with others, the corrupt condition into which the national drama had fallen in baser hands, and the immoral accompaniments of the degraded stage, he had seen no reason to recant his enthusiastic tribute to the memory of Shakespeare,

or to be ashamed of his own contribution to the dramatic literature of England in his two model masques.

Gradually, however, with Milton's growing seriousness amid the events and duties that awaited him after his return from his Italian journey, and especially after the meeting of the Long Parliament (Nov. 3, 1640), there came a change in his notions of the drama. From this period there is evidence that his sympathy with the Prynne view of things, at least as far as regarded the English stage, was more considerable than it had been—that, while he regarded all literature as recently infected with baseness and corruption, and requiring to be taught again its true relation to the spiritual needs and uses of a great nation, he felt an especial dislike to the popular literature of stage-plays, as then written and acted. From this period, if I mistake not, he was practically against theatre-going, as unworthy of a serious man, considering the contrast between what was to be seen within the theatres and what was in course of transaction without them; nor, if his two masques and his eulogy on Shakespeare had remained to be written now, do I think he would have judged it opportune to write them. Certainly he would not now have written the masques for actual performance, public or private. And yet he had not abandoned his admiration of the drama as a form of literature. On the contrary, he was still convinced that no form of literature was nobler, more capable of conveying the highest and most salutary conceptions of the mind of a great poet. When, immediately after his return from Italy, he was preparing himself for that great English poem upon which he proposed to bestow his full strength, and debating with himself what should be its subject and what its form, what do we find? We find him, for a while (*The Reason of Church Government*, Introd. to Book II.), balancing the claims of the epic, the dramatic, and the lyric, and concluding that in any one of these a great Christian poet might have congenial scope, and the benefit of grand precedents and models. He discusses the claims of the Epic first, and thinks highly of them, but proceeds immediately to inquire "whether those dramatic constitutions in "which Sophocles and Euripides reign shall be found more "doctrinal and exemplary to a nation," adding, "The Scripture "also affords us a divine Pastoral Drama in the Song of Solomon, "consisting of two persons and a double chorus, as Origen rightly

"judges; and the Apocalypse of St. John is the majestic image "of a high and stately Tragedy, shutting up and intermingling "her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of halle-"lujahs and harping symphonies; and this my opinion the grave "authority of Paræus, commenting that book, is sufficient to "confirm." Here we have certainly a proof that no amount of sympathy which Milton may have felt with the Puritan dislike of stage-plays had affected his admiration of the dramatic form of poesy as practised by the ancient Greek tragedians and others. Accordingly, it was to the dramatic form, rather than to either the epic or the lyric, that Milton then inclined in his meditations of some great English poem to be written by himself. As we have already seen (Introduction to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 42—44), he threw aside his first notion of an epic on King Arthur, and began to collect possible subjects for dramas from Scriptural History, and from the early history of Britain. He collected and jotted down the titles of no fewer than sixty possible tragedies on subjects from the Old and New Testaments, and thirty-eight possible tragedies on subjects of English and Scottish History—among which latter, curiously enough, was one on the subject of *Macbeth*. From this extraordinary collection of possible subjects *Paradise Lost* already stood out as that which most fascinated him; but even that subject was to be treated dramatically.

All this was before the year 1642. On the 2d of September in that year—the King having a few days before raised his standard at Nottingham, and given the signal for the Civil War—there was passed the famous ordinance of Parliament suppressing stage-plays "while the public troubles last," and shutting up the London theatres. From that date onwards to the Restoration, or for nearly eighteen years, the Drama, in the sense of the Acted Drama, was in abeyance in England. This fact may have co-operated with other reasons in determining Milton—when he did at length find leisure for returning to his scheme of a great English poem—to abandon the dramatic form he had formerly favoured. True, the mere discontinuance of stage-plays in England, as an amusement inconsistent with Puritan ideas, and intolerable in the state of the times, cannot, even though Milton approved of such discontinuance (as he doubtless did), have altered his former convictions in favour of the dramatic form of poetry, according to

its noblest ancient models—especially as he could have had no thought, when meditating his Scriptural Tragedies, of adapting them for actual performance. Such a tragedy as *he* had meant to write would not have been the least in conflict with the real operative element in the contemporary Puritan antipathy to the Drama. Still the Dramatic form itself had fallen into discredit; and there were weaker brethren with whom it would have been useless to reason on the distinction between the written Drama and the acted Drama, between the noblest tragedy on the ancient Greek model and the worst of those English stage-plays, of the reign of Charles, from which the nation had been compelled to desist. Milton does not seem to have been indifferent to this feeling. The tone of his reference to Shakespeare in his Εἰκονοκλαστης, published in 1649, suggests that, if he had not then really abated his allegiance to Shakespeare, he at least agreed so far with the ordinary Puritanism around him as not to think Shakespeare-worship the particular doctrine then required by the English mind.

For some such reason, among others, Milton, when he set himself at length (in 1658) to redeem his long-given pledge of a great English poem, and chose for his subject *Paradise Lost*, deliberately gave up his first intention of treating that subject in the dramatic form. When that poem was given to the world (1667), it was as an epic. Its companion, *Paradise Regained*, published in 1671, was also an epic.

But, though it was thus as an epic poet that Milton chose mainly and finally to appear before the world, he was so far faithful to his old affection for the Drama as to leave to the world one experiment of his mature art in that form. *Samson Agonistes* was an attestation that the poet who in his earlier years had written the beautiful pastoral drama of *Comus* had never ceased to like that form of poesy, but to the last believed it suitable, with modifications, for his severer and sterner purposes. At what time *Samson* was written is not definitely ascertained; but it was certainly after the Restoration, and probably after 1667. It was published in 1671, in the same volume with *Paradise Regained* (see title of the volume, &c. in Introd. to *Paradise Regained*, p. 2). For a time the connexion thus established between *Paradise Regained* and

Samson Agonistes was kept up in subsequent editions; but since 1688 I know of no publication of these two poems together by themselves. There have been one or two editions of the *Samson* by itself; but it has generally appeared either in collective editions of all the poems, or in editions of the minor poems apart from *Paradise Lost*.

How came Milton to select such a subject as that of *Samson Agonistes* for one of his latest poems, if not the very latest?

To this question it is partly an answer to say that the exploits of the Hebrew Samson had long before struck him as capable of treatment in an English tragedy. Among his jottings, in 1640–41, of subjects for possible Scripture Tragedies, we find these two, occurring as the 19th and 20th in the total list—"*Samson Pursophorus or Hybristes, or Samson Marrying, or Ramath-Lechi*," Judges xv.; and "*Dagonalia*," Judges xvi. That is to say, Milton, in 1640–41, thought there might be two sacred dramas founded on the accounts of Samson's life in the Book of Judges—the one on Samson's first marriage with a Philistian woman, and his feuds with the Philistines growing out of that incident, when he was *Pursophorus* (*i.e.* The Firebrand-bringer) or *Hybristes* (*i.e.* Violent); the other on the closing scene of his life, when he took his final vengeance on the Philistines in their feast to Dagon. These subjects, however, do not seem then to have had such attractions for Milton as some of the others in the list; for they are merely jotted down as above, whereas to some of the others, such as "*Dinah*," "*Abram from Morea*," and "*Sodom*," are appended sketches of the plot, or hints for the treatment. Why, then, did Milton, in his later life, neglect so many other subjects of which he had kept his early notes, and cling so tenaciously to the story of Samson?

The reason is not far to seek; nor need we seek it in the fact that he had seen Italian, Latin, and even English, poems on the story of Samson, which may have reminded him of the theme. Todd and other commentators have dug up the titles of some such old poems, without being able to prove that they suggested anything to Milton. The truth is that the capabilities of the theme, perceived by him through mere poetic tact as early as 1640–41, had been brought home to him, with singular force and

intimacy, by the experience of his own subsequent life. The story of Samson must have seemed to Milton a metaphor or allegory of much of his own life in its later stages. He also, in his veteran days, after the Restoration, was a champion at bay, a prophet-warrior left alone among men of a different faith and different manners—Philistines, who exulted in the ruin of his cause, and wreaked their wrath upon him for his past services to that cause by insults, calumnies, and jeers at his misfortunes and the cause itself. He also was blind, as Samson had been—groping about among the malignant conditions that had befallen him, helplessly dependent on the guiding of others, and bereft of the external consolations and means of resistance to his scorners that might have come to him through sight. He also had to live mainly in the imagery of the past. In that past, too, there were similarities in his case to that of Samson. Like Samson, substantially, he had been a Nazarite—no drinker of wine or strong drink, but one who had always been an ascetic in his dedicated service to great designs. And the chief blunder in his life, that which had gone nearest to wreck it, and had left the most marring consequences and the most painful reflections, was the very blunder of which, twice-repeated, Samson had to accuse himself. Like Samson, he had married a Philistine woman—one not of his own tribe, and having no thoughts or interests in common with his own; and, like Samson, he had suffered indignities from this wife and her relations, till he had learnt to rue the match. The consequences of Milton's unhappy first marriage (1643) in his temper and opinions form a marked train in his biography, extending far beyond their apparent end in the publication of his Divorce Pamphlets, followed by his hasty reconciliation with his wife after her two years' desertion of him (1645). Although, from that time, he lived with his first wife, without further audible complaint, till her death about 1652, and although his two subsequent marriages were happier, the recollection of his first marriage (and it was only the wife of this first marriage that he had ever *seen*) seems always to have been a sore in Milton's mind, and to have affected his thoughts of the marriage-institution itself, and of the ways and character of women. In this respect also he could find coincidences between his own life and that of Samson, which recommended the story of Samson with far more poignancy to

him in his later life than when he first looked at it in the inexperience of his early manhood. In short, there must have rushed upon Milton, contemplating in his later life the story of the blind Samson among the Philistines, so many similarities with his own case, that there is little wonder that he then selected this subject for poetic treatment. While writing *Samson Agonistes* (*i.e.* Samson the Agonist, Athlete, or Wrestler) he must have been secretly conscious throughout that he was representing much of his own feelings and experience; and the reader of the poem that knows anything of Milton's life has this pressed upon him at every turn. Probably the best introduction to the poem would be to read the Biblical history of Samson (Judges xiii.—xvi.) with the facts of Milton's life in one's mind.

The poem was put forth, however, with no intimation to this effect. That, indeed, might have been an obstacle to its passing the censorship. Readers were left to gather the fact for themselves, according to the degree of their information, and their quickness in interpreting. In the prose preface which Milton thought fit to prefix to the poem—entitled "*Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which is called Tragedy*"—he concerns himself not at all with the matter of the poem, or his own meaning in it, but only with its literary form. He explains why, towards the grave close of his life, he has not thought it inconsistent to write what might be called a Tragedy, and what particular kind of Tragedy he has taken care to write. The preface ought to be carefully read, in connexion with the remarks already made on Milton's early taste for the dramatic form of poesy, and the variations to which that taste had been subjected by circumstances. It will be noted that a large portion of the preface is apologetic. Although, after the Restoration, the drama had revived in England, and men were once more familiar with stage-plays, Milton evidently felt that many of his countrymen still retained their Puritanic horror of the Drama, and of all related to it—nay, that this horror might well be increased by the spectacle of the sort of plays supplied to the re-opened theatres by Dryden, Wycherley, and the other caterers for the amusement of Charles II. and his Court. An explanation might be demanded why, when the Drama was thus becoming a greater abomination than ever, a man like Milton should give his countenance in any way to the dramatic form of poetry. Accord-

ingly, Milton does explain, and in such a way as to distinguish as widely as possible between the Tragedy he has written and the stage-dramas then popular. "Tragedy, as it was anciently com-"posed," he says, "hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and "most profitable of all other poems." In order to fortify this statement he repeats Aristotle's definition of Tragedy, and reminds his readers that "philosophers and other gravest writers" frequently cite from the old tragic poets—nay, that St. Paul himself had quoted a verse of Euripides, and that, according to the judgment of a Protestant commentator on the Apocalypse, that book might be viewed as a tragedy of peculiar structure, with choruses between the acts. Some of the most eminent and active men in history, he adds, including one of the Fathers of the Christian Church, had written or attempted Tragedies. All this, he says, "is men-"tioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather "infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, "with other common interludes; happening through the poet's "error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity, "or introducing trivial and vulgar persons; which by all judicious "hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, "corruptly to gratify the people." It is impossible not to see, in the carefulness of this apology, that Milton felt that he was treading on perilous ground, and might give offence to the weaker brethren, by his use of the dramatic form at all, especially for a sacred subject. It is hardly possible either to avoid seeing, in the reference to the "error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity," an allusion to Shakespeare, as well as to Dryden and the post-Restoration dramatists.

Samson Agonistes, therefore, was offered to the world as a tragedy avowedly of a different order from that which had been established in England. It was a tragedy of the severe classic order, according to that noble Greek model which had been kept up by none of the modern nations, unless it might be the Italians. In reading it, not Shakespeare, nor Ben Jonson, nor Massinger, must be thought of, but Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Claiming this in general terms, the poet calls especial attention to his fidelity to ancient Greek precedents in two particulars—his use of the chorus, and his observation of the rule of unity in time. The tragedy, he says, never having been intended for the stage, but

only to be read, the division into acts and scenes is omitted. He does *not* say, however (and this is worth noting), that, had it been possible to produce the tragedy on the stage in a becoming manner, he would have objected to its being done. It is said that Bishop Atterbury, about 1722, had a scheme for bringing it on the stage at Westminster, the division into acts and names to be arranged by Pope. It was a fitter compliment when Handel, in 1742, made Samson the subject of an Oratorio, and married his great music to Milton's as great words.

SAMSON AGONISTES:

A DRAMATIC POEM.

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON.

Aristot. Poet. cap. 6. Τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c.—Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriæ, &c., per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM CALLED TRAGEDY.

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems; therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions—that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so, in physic, things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33; and Paræus, commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole book, as a tragedy, into acts, distinguished each by a Chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his *Ajax*, but, unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which he entitled

Christ Suffering. This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity, or introducing trivial and vulgar persons: which by all judicious hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And, though ancient Tragedy use no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence or explanation, that which Martial calls an Epistle, in behalf of this tragedy, coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be *epistled*—that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only, but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode,—which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called *Allæostropha.* Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit—which is nothing indeed but such economy, or disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum—they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is, according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

THE ARGUMENT.

SAMSON, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father, Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson—which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption: who, in the meanwhile, is visited by other persons, and, lastly, by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him. The Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope to procure ere long his son's deliverance; in the midst of which discourse an Ebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe—what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the Tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.

MANOA, the father of Samson.
DALILA, his wife.
HARAPHA of Gath.
Public Officer.
Messenger.
Chorus of Danites.

The Scene, before the Prison in Gaza.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

SAMS. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade.
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
The air, imprisoned also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught. But here I feel amends—
The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon, their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works. Unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence, with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease—
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
Oh, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an Angel, who at last, in sight
Of both my parents, all in flames ascended

From off the altar where an offering burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed
As of a person separate to God,
Designed for great exploits, if I must die
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze,
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength,
Put to the labour of a beast, debased
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver!
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
Yet stay; let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction. What if all foretold
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default?
Whom have I to complain of but myself,
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears?
O impotence of mind in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom? Vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties; not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.

But peace! I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know.
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries—
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail. But, chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies! O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased.
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm, the vilest here excel me:
They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own—
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
"Let there be light, and light was over all,"
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon,
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part, why was the sight

To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but, O yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave;
Buried, yet not exempt,
By privilege of death and burial,
From worst of other evils, pains, and wrongs;
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way;
Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult—
Their daily practice to afflict me more.
Chor. This, this is he; softly a while;
Let us not break in upon him.
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
With languished head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandoned,
And by himself given over,
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'er-worn and soiled.
Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renowned,
Irresistible Samson? whom, unarmed,
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could withstand;

Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid;
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,
And, weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,
Chalybean-tempered steel, and frock of mail
Adamantean proof:
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp; old warriors turned
Their plated backs under his heel,
Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day:
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore,
The gates of Azza, post and massy bar,
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old—
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so—
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven.
Which shall I first bewail—
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
Imprisoned now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
To incorporate with gloomy night;

For inward light, alas!
Puts forth no visual beam.
O mirror of our fickle state,
Since man on earth, unparalleled,
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.
For him I reckon not in high estate
Whom long descent of birth,
Or the sphere of fortune, raises;
But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the Earth,
Universally crowned with highest praises.
Sams. I hear the sound of words; their sense the air
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.
Chor. He speaks: let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,
The glory late of Israel, now the grief!
We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown,
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,
To visit or bewail thee; or, if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores: apt words have power to swage
The tumours of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to festered wounds.
Sams. Your coming, friends, revives me; for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who 'friends'
Bear in their superscription (of the most
I would be understood). In prosperous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
How many evils have enclosed me round;
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,

Blindness; for, had I sight, confused with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwracked
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigged, and for a word, a tear,
Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverbed for a fool
In every street? Do they not say, 'How well
Are come upon him his deserts'? Yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me; of wisdom nothing more than mean.
This with the other should at least have paired;
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.

Chor. Tax not divine disposal. Wisest men
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not, then, so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

Sams. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed
The daughter of an infidel. They knew not
That what I motioned was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged
The marriage on, that, by occasion hence,
I might begin Israel's deliverance—
The work to which I was divinely called.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had! fond wish too late!)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,

That specious monster, my accomplished snare.
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end, still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors. Of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who, vanquished with a peal of words (O weakness!),
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness;
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

Sams. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,
Who, seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors,
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered,
Deliverance offered. I, on the other side,
Used no ambition to commend my deeds;
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the docr.
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords, the Philistines, with gathered powers,
Entered Judea, seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham was retired—
Not flying, but forecasting in what place
To set upon them, what advantaged best.
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round;
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the Uncircumcised a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords. But cords to me were threads
Touched with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled

Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom now they serve.
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty—
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty—
And to despise, or envy, or suspect,
Whom God hath of his special favour raised
As their deliverer? If he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!
Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel
Their great deliverer contemned,
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit
Of Madian, and her vanquished kings;
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quelled their pride
In that sore battle when so many died
Without reprieve, adjudged to death
For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.
Sams. Of such examples add me to the roll.
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's proposed deliverance not so.
Chor. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men,
Unless there be who think not God at all.
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school,

But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.
  Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts found contradicting;
Then give the reins to wandering thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution,
Till, by their own perplexities involved,
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.
  As if they would confine the Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whomso it pleases him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.
  He would not else, who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.
  Down, Reason, then; at least, vain reasonings down;
Though Reason here aver
That moral verdit quits her of unclean:
Unchaste was subsequent; her stain, not his.
  But see! here comes thy reverend sire,
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoa: advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.
  Sams. Ay me! another inward grief, awaked
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

Man. Brethren and men of Dan (for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place), if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son, now captive, hither hath informed
Your younger feet, while mine, cast back with age,
Came lagging after, say if he be here.
Chor. As signal now in low dejected state
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.
Man. O miserable change! Is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renowned,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to Angels' walked their streets,
None offering fight; who, single combatant,
Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,
Himself an army—now unequal match
To save himself against a coward armed
At one spear's length? O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and, oh, what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good
Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gained a son,
And such a son as all men hailed me happy:
Who would be now a father in my stead?
Oh, wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers, then, given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?
For this did the Angel twice descend? for this
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant
Select and sacred? glorious for a while,
The miracle of men; then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,

Thy foes' derision, captive, poor and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves!
Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Sams. Appoint not heavenly disposition, father.
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly; I myself have brought them on;
Sole author I, sole cause. If aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God, given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
But warned by oft experience. Did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her highth
Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith, who, also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offered only, by the scent conceived,
Her spurious first-born, Treason against me?
Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs,
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know;
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly and with what impudence
She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse

Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself.
Yet, the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night
To storm me, over-watched and wearied out,
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,
Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,
Might easily have shook off all her snares;
But foul effeminacy held me yoked
Her bond-slave. O indignity, O blot
To honour and religion! servile mind
Rewarded well with servile punishment!
The base degree to which I now am fallen,
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
True slavery; and that blindness worse than this,
That saw not how degenerately I served.

Man. I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son—
Rather approved them not; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that; this I am sure—our foes
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms,
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee—which to have kept
Tacit was in thy power. True; and thou bear'st
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still are paying,
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains:—

This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza, and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud,
To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered
Thee, Samson, bound and blind, into their hands—
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

Sams. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high
Among the Heathen round—to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths
Of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols:
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest,
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end. All the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon. Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,
But will arise, and his great name assert.

Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshipers.

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee; and these words
I as a prophecy receive; for God
(Nothing more certain) will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
Thou must not in the meanwhile, here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom. Well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge,
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

Sams. Spare that proposal, father; spare the trouble
Of that solicitation. Let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment,
And expiate, if possible, my crime,
Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
Secrets of *men*, the secrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all—to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front!
But I *God's* counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously,
Weakly at least and shamefully—a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn
To their Abyss and horrid pains confined.

Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite;
But act not in thy own affliction, son.
Repent the sin; but, if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
Or the execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself. Perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
Who ever more approves and more accepts
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)
Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
For self-offence more than for God offended.
Reject not, then, what offered means who knows
But God hath set before us to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed.
Sams. His pardon I implore; but, as for life,
To what end should I seek it? When in strength
All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes,
With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heaven foretold and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walked about, admired of all, and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront—
Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life,
At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge

Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me,
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
Shaven, and disarmed among my enemies.

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warrior overturns,
Thou could'st repress; nor did the dancing ruby,
Sparkling out-poured, the flavour or the smell,
Or taste, that cheers the heart of gods and men,
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

Sams. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refreshed; nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Chor. O madness! to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook!

Sams. But what availed this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquished? by which means,
Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,
To what can I be useful? wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed?
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object; these redundant locks,
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,

Vain monument of strength; till length of years
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure.
Here rather let me drudge, and earn my bread,
Till vermin, or the draff of servile food,
Consume me, and oft-invocated death
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.
Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn.
But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
After the brunt of battle, can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast.
And I persuade me so. Why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee not for naught,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.
Sams. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend—
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor the other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand;
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat: Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.
Man. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
From anguish of the mind, and humours black
That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,
Must not omit a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance

By ransom or how else: meanwhile be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

Sams. Oh, that torment should not be confined
To the body's wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast, and reins,
But must secret passage find
To the inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense!

My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage;
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings,
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nursling once and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain;

He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against the Uncircumcised, our enemies:
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless.
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition—speedy death,
The close of all my miseries and the balm.
Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life,
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
Lenient of grief and anxious thought.
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings that repair his strength
And fainting spirits uphold.
God of our fathers! what is Man,
That thou towards him with hand so various—
Or might I say contrarious?—
Temper'st thy providence through his short course:
Not evenly, as thou rul'st

The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute?
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That, wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish as the summer fly,
Heads without name, no more remembered;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect.
Yet toward these, thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their highth of noon,
Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no regard
highest favours past
m thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high—
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission;
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ungrateful multitude.
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deformed,
In crude old age;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days. In fine,
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already!
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.
But who is this? what thing of sea or land—
Female of sex it seems—
That, so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way sailing,
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadire,
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled, and streamers waving,
Courted by all the winds that hold them play;
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind?
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem;
And now, at nearer view, no other certain
Than Dalila thy wife.
Sams. My wife! my traitress! let her not come near me.
Chor. Yet on she moves; now stands and eyes thee fixed,
About to have spoke; but now, with head declined,
Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,
And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil.
But now again she makes address to speak.
Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson;
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge. Yet, if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw),
My penance hath not slackened, though my pardon

No way assured. But conjugal affection,
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power—
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

Sams. Out, out, hyæna! These are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee—
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray;
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feigned remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change—
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then, with more cautious and instructed skill,
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom-snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that, on the other side, if it be weighed
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,
Or else with just allowance counterpoised,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.

First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them—both common female faults—
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for naught,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou show'dst me first the way.
But I to enemies revealed, and should not!
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness, then, with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind;
Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy; feared lest one day thou would'st leave me
As her at Timna; sought by all means, therefore,
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
No better way I saw than by importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
'Why, then, revealed?' I was assured by those
Who tempted me that nothing was designed
Against thee but safe custody and hold.
That made for me; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed;

Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in Love's law have passed for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.
Sams. How cunningly the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
By this appears. I gave, thou say'st, the example,
I led the way—bitter reproach, but true;
I to myself was false ere thou to me.
Such pardon, therefore, as I give my folly
Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it—weakness to resist
Philistian gold. If weakness may excuse,
What murtherer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness; that plea, therefore,
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrained thee! Call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust. Love seeks to have love;
My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed?

In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.
Dal. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me. Thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion—pressed how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious, to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroyed
Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonourer of Dagon. What had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate,
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest. At length, that grounded maxim,
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects must yield, with grave authority
Took full possession of me, and prevailed;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining.
Sams. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end—
In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy!
But, had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee

Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I, before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation, chose thee from among
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st;
Too well; unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpowered
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why, then,
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband—
Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own;
Thou mine, not theirs. If aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations;
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee;
To please thy gods thou didst it! Gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, Gods cannot be—
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared.
These false pretexts and varnished colours failing,
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear!
Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.
Sams. For want of words, no doubt, or lack of breath!
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.
Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.

Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson;
Afford me place to show what recompense
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided. Only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights—
At home, in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eyesight exposes, daily, men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care,
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age,
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.
Sams. No, no; of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;
Nor think me so unwary or accursed
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught. I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils.
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,
No more on me have power; their force is nulled;
So much of adder's wisdom I have learned,
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone could hate me,
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me,
How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child

Helpless, thence easily contemned and scorned,
And last neglected! How would'st thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thraldom! how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile!
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

Sams. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee; go with that;
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives;
Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason: so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas. Yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore:
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate,
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.
My name, perhaps, among the Circumcised

In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.
But in my country, where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be named among the famousest
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who, to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock bands; my tomb
With odours visited and annual flowers;
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim
Jael, who, with inhospitable guile,
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honour and reward
Conferred upon me for the piety
Which to my country I was judged to have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

Chor. She's gone—a manifest serpent by her sting
Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

Sams. So let her go. God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

Chor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sams. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end;
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win, or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,
Which way soever men refer it,
(Much like thy riddle, Samson) in one day
Or seven though one should musing sit.
If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymph, worthless to thee compared,
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,
Capacity not raised to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but oftest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mixed,
Of constancy no root infixed,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once joined, the contrary she proves—a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent; or by her charms
Draws him awry, enslaved
With dotage, and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends.

What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,
Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm?
  Favoured of Heaven who finds
One virtuous, rarely found,
That in domestic good combines!
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines and most is acceptable above.
  Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not swayed
By female usurpation, nor dismayed.
  But had we best retire? I see a storm.
  Sams. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.
  Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.
  Sams. Be less abstruse; my riddling days are past.
  Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honeyed words; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? What wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.
  Sams. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.
  Chor. His fraught we soon shall know: he now arrives.
  Har. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,

Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath;
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old
That Kiriathaim held. Thou know'st me now,
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed,
Incredible to me, in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.

Sams. The way to know were not to see, but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw!
I should have forced thee soon with other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown;
So had the glory of prowess been recovered
To Palestine, won by a Philistine
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts. That honour,
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

Sams. Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do
What then thou would'st; thou seest it in thy hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
And thou hast need much washing to be touched

Sams. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me, assassinated and betrayed;
Who durst not with their whole united powers
In fight withstand me single and unarmed,

Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
Till they had hired a woman with their gold,
Breaking her marriage-faith, to circumvent me.
Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assigned
Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,
Vant-brace and greaves and gauntlet; add thy spear,
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield:
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast
Again in safety what thou would'st have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.
Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art,
Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from Heaven
Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back
Of chafed wild boars or ruffled porcupines.
Sams. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
My trust is in the Living God, who gave me,
At my nativity, this strength, diffused
No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,

The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
Go to his temple, invocate his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee, his champion bold,
With the utmost of his godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.
Har. Presume not on thy God. Whate'er he be,
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and delivered up
Into thy enemies' hand; permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,
As good for nothing else, no better service
With those thy boisterous locks; no worthy match
For valour to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,
But by the barber's razor best subdued.
Sams. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murtherer, a revolter, and a robber!

Sams. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me these?

Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confessed it when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and delivered bound
Into our hands; for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then, like a robber, stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sams. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe,
And in your city held my nuptial feast;
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who, threatening cruel death, constrained the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solved the riddle which I had proposed.
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,
I used hostility, and took their spoil,
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords!
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquered can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed
Single rebellion, and did hostile acts!

I was no private, but a person raised,
With strength sufficient, and command from Heaven,
To free my country. If their servile minds
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought,
The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,
And had performed it if my known offence
Had not disabled me, not all your force.
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant,
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

Har. With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

Sams. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdit?
Come nearer; part not hence so slight informed;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unused
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Sams. No man withholds thee; nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van;
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

Sams. Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down,
To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.

Har. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee.

Chor. His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.
Sams. I dread him not, nor all his giant brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliah chief.
Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.
Sams. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not;
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
If they intend advantage of my labours,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping,
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will; my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence;
The worst that he can give to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.
Chor. O, how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might,
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour truth!
He all their ammunition

And feats of war defeats,
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour armed;
Their armouries and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With winged expedition
Swift as the lightning glance he executes
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.
But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.
This Idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.
And yet, perhaps, more trouble is behind;
For I descry this way
Some other tending; in his hand
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand.
His message will be short and voluble.

Off. Ebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

Chor. His manacles remark him; there he sits.

Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say:
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,

With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honour this great feast, and great assembly.
Rise, therefore, with all speed, and come along,
Where I will see thee heartened and fresh clad,
To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.
Sams. Thou know'st I am an Ebrew; therefore tell them
Our law forbids at their religious rites
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.
Off. This answer, be assured, will not content them.
Sams. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,
And over-laboured at their public mill,
To make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels,
On my refusal, to distress me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou cam'st; I will not come.
Off. Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.
Sams. Myself! my conscience, and internal peace.
Can they think me so broken, so debased
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
Will condescend to such absurd commands?
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
And, in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief,
To show them feats, and play before their god—
The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Joined with extreme contempt! I will not come.
Off. My message was imposed on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?
Sams. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.
Sams. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.
Chor. Consider, Samson; matters now are strained
Up to the highth, whether to hold or break.
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another message, more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.
Sams. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression—so requite
Favour renewed, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols,
A Nazarite, in place abominable,
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon?
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
What act more execrably unclean, profane?
Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines,
Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.
Sams. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.
Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.
Sams. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds:
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
Not dragging? The Philistian lords command:
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind; which, in his jealousy,
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.
Sams. Be of good courage; I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along—
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.
Chor. In time thou hast resolved: the man returns.
Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say: Art thou our slave,
Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
And dar'st thou, at our sending and command,
Dispute thy coming? Come without delay;
Or we shall find such engines to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock.
Sams. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious;
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection;
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men!)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.
Off. I praise thy resolution. Doff these links:
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Sams. Brethren, farewell. Your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends; and how the sight
Of me, as of a common enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine;
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned;
No less the people, on their holy-days,
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable.
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law, my nation, or myself;
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.
Chor. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the Heathen round;
Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that Spirit that first rushed on thee
In the camp of Dan,
Be efficacious in thee now at need!
For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste
With youthful steps? Much livelier than erewhile
He seems: supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?
Man. Peace with you, brethren! My inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,

By order of the lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came; the city rings,
And numbers thither flock: I had no will,
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that which moved my coming now was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.
Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee. Say, reverend sire; we thirst to hear.
Man. I have attempted, one by one, the lords,
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son, their prisoner.
Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenced Dagon and his priests:
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and State
They easily would set to sale: a third
More generous far and civil, who confessed
They had enough revenged, having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears;
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were proposed.
What noise or shout was that? It tore the sky.
Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.
Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And numbered down. Much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest
And he in that calamitous prison left.

No, I am fixed not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forgo
And quit. Not wanting him, I shall want nothing.
Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons;
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all:
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age;
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.
Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in his house, ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achieved,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks
That of a nation armed the strength contained.
And I persuade me God hath not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair
Garrisoned round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him further yet in some great service—
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.
And, since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.
Chor. Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain,
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love;
In both which we, as next, participate.
Man. I know your friendly minds, and . . . O, what noise!
Mercy of Heaven! what hideous noise was that?
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.
Chor. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation perished?
Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.
Oh! it continues; they have slain my son.
Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them: that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be.
What shall we do—stay here, or run and see?
Chor. Best keep together here, lest, running thither,
We unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fallen:
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers, then, will scarce molest us here;
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way?
Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.
Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?
Man. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.
Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding—
An Ebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.
Messenger. O, whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason, though disturbed and scarce consulted,
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these

My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concerned.
Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
With rueful cry; yet what it was we hear not.
No preface needs; thou seest we long to know.
Mess. It would burst forth; but I recover breath,
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.
Man. Tell us the sum; the circumstance defer.
Mess. Gaza yet stands; but all her sons are fallen,
All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.
Man. Sad! but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
The desolation of a hostile city.
Mess. Feed on that first; there may in grief be surfeit.
Man. Relate by whom.
Mess. By Samson.
Man. That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.
Mess. Ah! Manoa, I refrain too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon,
Lest evil tidings, with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.
Man. Suspense in news is torture; speak them out.
Mess. Then take the worst in brief: Samson is dead.
Man. The worst indeed! O, all my hope's defeated
To free him hence! but Death, who sets all free,
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceived,
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost!
Yet, ere I give the reins to grief, say first
How died he; death to life is crown or shame.

All by him fell, thou say'st; by whom fell he?
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?
Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.
Man. Wearied with slaughter, then, or how? explain.
Mess. By his own hands.
Man. Self-violence! What cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes?
Mess. Inevitable cause—
At once both to destroy and be destroyed.
The edifice, where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.
Man. O lastly over-strong against thyself!
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but, while things yet
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.
Mess. Occasions drew me early to this city;
And, as the gates I entered with sun-rise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
Through each high street. Little I had dispatched,
When all abroad was rumoured that this day
Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre,
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords, and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand:
I among these aloof obscurely stood.

The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
When to their sports they turned. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad: before him pipes
And timbrels; on each side went armed guards;
Both horse and foot before him and behind,
Archers and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assayed,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
All with incredible, stupendous force,
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length, for intermission sake, they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard),
As over-tired, to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the arched roof gave main support.
He unsuspicious led him; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined,
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved:
At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud:—
"Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld;
Now, of my own accord, such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength yet greater
As with amaze shall strike all who behold"

This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed;
As with the force of winds and waters pent
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson, with these immixed, inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself;
The vulgar only scaped, who stood without.

Chor. O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now liest victorious
Among thy slain self-killed;
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
Of dire Necessity, whose law in death conjoined
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more
Than all thy life had slain before.

Semichor. While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chaunting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread, who dwells
In Silo, his bright sanctuary,
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer.

They, only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
Fallen into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.
Semichor. But he, though blind of sight,
Despised, and thought extinguished quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon came,
Assailant on the perched roosts
And nests in order ranged
Of tame villatic fowl, but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So Virtue, given for lost,
Depressed and overthrown, as seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teemed,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deemed;
And, though her body die, her fame survives,
A secular bird, ages of lives.
Man. Come, come; no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause. Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroicly hath finished
A life heroic, on his enemies
Fully revenged—hath left them years of mourning,

And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
Through all Philistian bounds; to Israel
Honour hath left and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
To himself and father's house eternal fame;
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was feared,
But favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream
With lavers pure, and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay),
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend,
With silent obsequy and funeral train,
Home to his father's house. There will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour and adventures high;
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt
What the unsearchable dispose

Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft He seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent.
His servants He, with new acquist
Of true experience from this great event,
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
And calm of mind, all passion spent.

THE END.

MINOR POEMS.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION;

OR,

CHRONOLOGY OF THE POEMS:

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE EDITIONS OF 1645 AND 1673, AND OF THE CAMBRIDGE VOLUME OF MILTON MSS.

MILTON was a poet from his childhood. The earliest verses of his that have been preserved, however, are his

PARAPHRASES ON PSALMS CXIV. AND CXXXVI.

These were done "at fifteen years old"—*i.e.* in 1624, when Milton was a boy at St. Paul's School in London, just finishing his course there, and preparing to go to College.

AT CAMBRIDGE: 1625—1632.

In February 1624-5, or when sixteen years and two months old, Milton was admitted at Christ's College, Cambridge; and he remained at Cambridge (constantly there in term-time, though spending the vacations in London or elsewhere) till July 1632, when he left the University, as Master of Arts and with the highest distinction, at the age of twenty-three years and seven months. These seven years of his residence at Cambridge were a period of considerable literary activity. Besides four of his Latin familiar Epistles, one English letter to a friend, and seven Latin academic

exercises in prose, there remain, of his writings during this period, the following English and Latin poems :—

I. ENGLISH :—

"ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT DYING OF A COUGH." 1626.
"AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE." 1628.
"ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY" (with "THE HYMN"). 1629.
"THE PASSION."
"ON TIME."
"UPON THE CIRCUMCISION."
"AT A SOLEMN MUSICK."
"SONG ON MAY MORNING."
"ON SHAKESPEARE." 1630.
"ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER, who sickened in the time of his vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the Plague." 1630–1.
"ANOTHER ON THE SAME." 1630–1.
"AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER." 1631.
SONNET, "O Nightingale" (perhaps of this period).
SONNET on his having arrived at the age of twenty-three. Dec. 1631.

II. LATIN :—

"AD CAROLUM DIODATUM" (among the Elegies). 1626.
"IN OBITUM PRÆSULIS WINTONIENSIS" (among the Elegies). 1626.
"IN OBITUM PRÆSULIS ELIENSIS" (among the Sylvæ). 1626.
"IN OBITUM PRÆCONIS ACADEMICI CANTABRIGIENSIS" (among the Elegies). 1626.
"IN OBITUM PROCANCELLARII MEDICI" (among the Sylvæ). 1626.
"IN QUINTUM NOVEMBRIS" (among the Sylvæ). 1626.
"IN PRODITIONEM BOMBARDICAM"
"IN EANDEM"
"IN EANDEM"
"IN EANDEM"
"IN INVENTOREM BOMBARDÆ"
} Among the Elegies.
"AD THOMAM JUNIUM, PRÆCEPTOREM SUUM, apud mercatores Anglicos Hamburgæ agentes Pastoris munere fungentem" (among the Elegies). 1627.
ELEGY, beginning "Nondum blanda tuas" (among the Elegies). 1628.
"NATURAM NON PATI SENIUM" (among the Sylvæ). 1628.
"DE IDEÂ PLATONICÂ QUEMADMODUM ARISTOTELES INTELLEXIT" (among the Sylvæ).
"IN ADVENTUM VERIS" (among the Elegies). 1628–9.
"AD CAROLUM DIODATUM, RURI COMMORANTEM" (among the Elegies). 1629.

With such a collection of pieces in English and Latin, the fruit of his leisure hours at Cambridge, Milton, when he left the University in his twenty-fourth year, might have made a respectable appearance, in a small published volume, among the poets of the day. His Elegy "On the Death of a Fair Infant," and his fine hymn "On the Nativity," would alone have certified his poetic genius. So far as appears, however, he kept all his poems still in manuscript. His Latin lines, "Naturam non pati senium," had, indeed, been printed and circulated anonymously in Cambridge in June 1628, when he was yet an undergraduate. These lines had been written by him for one of the Fellows of his College who had to take part in the public philosophical debate at the "Commencement" ceremony of that year, when it was usual to print such verses on the subject of the debate, to be put into the hands of those present. With this exception, there is no evidence that anything of Milton's was in print till the year 1632, when he left College. In that year his lines "On Shakespeare," written in 1630, were prefixed, but without his name or initials, to the second folio edition of Shakespeare's works, with this title, "*An Epitaph on the admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakspeare.*" It has been noted as interesting that Milton's first public appearance in print should have been on this occasion.

At Horton, in Buckinghamshire: 1632—1638.

After leaving Cambridge, and having decided not to enter the Church or any other of the professions, Milton spent the next five years and nine months of his life (*i.e.* from July 1632 to April 1638, or from his twenty-fourth to his thirtieth year) chiefly at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, near Windsor—to which country place his father had retired with a sufficient fortune, after having been for many years a London scrivener. In this quiet seclusion—from which, however, visits to London, or excursions to other parts of England, could be frequent—Milton devoted himself to laborious reading and study, varied by occasional additions to his manuscript stock of English and Latin compositions. To the Horton period, indeed, belong the finest of his minor poems. The following is a list of the pieces written during this period:—

I. English :—

"L'Allegro."

"Il Penseroso."

"Arcades : Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess-Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some noble persons of her Family." (Although this poem is usually referred to the Horton period, and even, more particularly, to 1633 or 1634, it may possibly be a composition of the Cambridge period, earlier than 1632.)

Comus : not so entitled by Milton himself, but simply "A Mask presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, then President of Wales."

"Lycidas. In this Monody the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height." Nov. 1637.

II. Latin :—

"Ad Patrem" (among the Sylvæ).

III. Greek :—

Translation into Greek of Psalm CXIV. (among the Sylvæ). 1634.

Here was certainly a goodly addition to the stock of pieces written during the Cambridge period. Nor did all these new pieces remain in manuscript. Two of them, at least, were published, and in such a manner as to call attention to the author, though his name was not given. These were *Comus* and *Lycidas*. The first of these was by far the most considerable thing that Milton had yet written, being nothing less than a regular pastoral masque, or drama, of more than a thousand lines, with songs interspersed. It was published separately, in circumstances to be more minutely described hereafter (see Special Introduction to *Comus* in the sequel), by Milton's friend, the musician Henry Lawes, who had been concerned in the getting up of the masque, and in its performance at Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire. This performance, which took place in 1634, had made such an impression that for several years afterwards Lawes had been applied to in London for copies of the piece. Accordingly, to save himself the trouble of making more copies, he printed it in a small volume in 1637. It cannot be doubted that Milton, though concealing his name, consented to this publication of the masque by Lawes. He certainly had copies for private distribution. One of these copies he sent, on the 6th of April, 1638, to the aged and much distinguished

Sir Henry Wotton, then Provost of Eton College, near Horton, whose acquaintance he had recently made. Wotton's high admiration of the poem, and especially of the songs in it, appears from his famous letter to Milton, of the 13th of the same month, sent just in time to overtake Milton before he left England on his Italian journey. Doubtless, others besides the old Provost of Eton had begun by this time to recognise in Milton an English poet of unusual quality. For his *Lycidas*, written in November 1637, was also now in circulation, and, though not with his name, yet with his initials "J. M.," and in circumstances which must have informed many that these initials designated John Milton, late of Christ's College, Cambridge. What these circumstances were will be related in the Special Introduction to *Lycidas*.

ITALIAN JOURNEY: 1638—1639.

Leaving his *Comus* and *Lycidas* to produce their impression, Milton, now in his thirtieth year, went abroad on a tour. His mother had died and been buried at Horton in the previous year; and his widowed father, now an aged man, remained at Horton, in the care of his younger son, Christopher Milton, who was preparing for the bar, and had just taken a wife. Milton's absence abroad extended from April 1638 to July or August 1639. During these fifteen months he travelled through France, visiting Paris, and resided for a good while in Italy, mainly at Florence and Rome, but going as far south as Naples. In each of these cities he was well received, and made acquaintance with interesting men. By way of acknowledgment of the kindness of these new foreign friends, he wrote a few trifles in Italian and Latin, of which the following were in verse, and were preserved by him:—

I. ITALIAN:—

Five SONNETS and one CANZONE.

II. LATIN:—

"AD LEONORAM ROMÆ CANENTEM"
"AD EANDEM" } Among the Elegies.
"AD EANDEM"
"AD SALSILLUM, Poetam Romanum, ægrotantem: Scazontes" (among the Sylvæ).
"MANSUS" (among the Sylvæ).

FIRST SIX YEARS OF LONDON CITIZENSHIP: 1639—1645.

Returning from Italy, with these few trifles added to his former stock in manuscript, with his mind full of new images and impressions, and also with some valuable complimentary letters and verses addressed to him by Italians of note, Milton resumed his life in England in the autumn of 1639, and prepared for the labours for which he had hitherto been but educating himself. He was now approaching his thirty-second year; but, in his own opinion, he had still to enter on his real career. What was that? It was to be the career of a man of letters, after a higher ideal of that career than had probably been formed by any Englishman before. Especially, it was to be the career of an English poet, selecting the highest and noblest themes, and treating them in such a manner that what was noblest in himself should pass as an ennobling element into the soul of the nation to which he belonged, and should survive to future times in forms of the most finished art. All that he had hitherto written was to be regarded as but the tuning of the instrument for the greater performances which he now contemplated. Of what he had written nothing had yet been published with his name. He had kept his name back till it might be heard of in association with works of larger scope and enterprise.

It was with these thoughts and intentions that Milton, after revisiting Horton and his friends there, settled down definitely as a citizen of London. He resided first in lodgings in St. Bride's Churchyard, Fleet Street, and afterwards in a house of his own in Aldersgate Street, where he had his two young nephews, Edward and John Phillips, to board with him. It was here that, during the years 1640 and 1641, he engaged in those preparations for a great English poem which we have described in the Introduction to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 40—49. Throwing aside his first scheme of an Epic on King Arthur, and then inclining rather to the dramatic form of poetry, he collected and considered scores of possible subjects for Tragedies before fixing on that which might be best. In the midst of these occupations, however, came the great interruption. The struggle between Charles I. and his subjects, of which Milton had hitherto been able to be only a thoughtful

observer, had reached a point at which he and others like him could openly assist. The Long Parliament had met, and all pens and tongues outside of Parliament were summoned to help in the great discussions which were going on within its walls. Milton, whose sympathies from his youth upwards had been strongly with the popular cause, laid aside his poetic schemes, and plunged into the political controversy as a prose pamphleteer. *We* now know that it was as a poet that Milton had begun life, and that, when he was thirty-two years old, he had already done enough to entitle him to fame among his countrymen as an English poet. But the fact is that he had not then won this fame in England, and that, save by the few that had chanced to read *Comus* and *Lycidas*, and to identify him as the author, he was first heard of by his countrymen in the character of a pamphleteer of extreme opinions. He became known to most of them first as the author, in particular, of five prose pamphlets which came out in rapid succession, in the years 1641 and 1642, advocating the complete abolition of Episcopacy, and a radical reconstruction of the Church of England. Nor had he leisure, after this first outburst of prose polemics, to revert to the occupations which might reveal him in his other character. He was still residing in Aldersgate Street when the Civil War broke out (Aug. 1642); and, besides experiencing the anxiety and confusion which the war brought upon all the country, and especially on London, he soon had troubles of a more private nature. It was in the summer of 1643 that he brought home to the house in Aldersgate Street his first wife, Mary Powell, a young lady of a Royalist family near Oxford. It was a hasty and unhappy union; for, after remaining with him some weeks, the young bride went on a visit to her father's house, and refused to return. The effect of this chagrin and indignity on Milton's mind was characteristic and peculiar. It led him to a reconsideration of all existing theories of the marriage-institution, and to a resolution to fling into the mind of England, already agitated with controversies enough, a controversy of vital interest to himself, but for which, or for his demonstrations of its relevancy to the other questions of the time, his countrymen were not prepared. This was a controversy as to the proper terms of the marriage-relation and the rights of Divorce. He raised it in an extraordinary pamphlet on the Doctrine and

Discipline of Divorce, speedily followed by three further pamphlets on the same subject; in addition to which, not forgetting the progress of other public questions more to the taste of the great body of his countrymen, he published, in the course of the year 1644, a small tract on Reform in the System of Education, and his noble *Areopagitica*, or Defence of the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing. It is probable that his farther public prosecution of the Divorce Controversy was arrested by the return of his wife, and his reconciliation with her (1645). This event, together with the increase of his pupils, and the necessity of accommodating under his roof some of his wife's relations, as well as his own father, who had for some time lived with him, caused him to remove to a larger house. Accordingly, towards the end of 1645, he removed from Aldersgate Street to a house in Barbican, a street in the same neighbourhood.

Six years of public strife and private trouble had thus elapsed since Milton's return from Italy, full of bright dreams of a life of poetic accomplishment. The dreams were yet unfulfilled. He was known in London and in England chiefly as a vehement prose-pamphleteer, of the extreme party in Church and State, and even outgoing that party in some tremendous opinions of his own. Any recollection anywhere of his *Comus* and *Lycidas* was probably obliterated by the fiercer impress of his new reputation. Yet, though obliged by public and private reasons to defer his schemes of purely poetic activity, Milton had not ceased to cultivate the gentler Muse in brief occasional moments. During those six years he had added at least a few scraps of verse to his former store. The following is a list of them :—

I. LATIN :—

"EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS :" a Latin Pastoral (among the Sylvæ) on the death of the dearest friend of his youth, Charles Diodati, the son of an Italian physician settled in London. The death had occurred during Milton's absence in Italy, and the particulars were not known to him till his return to England. 1639.

II. GREEK :—

Hexameter lines, entitled "Philosophus ad regem quendam," &c. (among the Sylvæ).

III. English :—

Three Sonnets ; viz.—

"Captain or Colonel," &c. 1642.

"Lady that in the prime," &c. 1644.

"Daughter to that good Earl," &c. 1644.

Looking at these small additions, in so long a period as six years, to his manuscript stock of poems, and seeing that it might still be some time before he could redeem his promise of more extensive poetic achievement, it seems to have occurred to Milton that he might at least give to the world in the meantime, and with his name attached, such pieces as he had. Probably, at a time when men were thinking of him chiefly as an anti-Episcopal pamphleteer and eloquent advocate of extreme opinions in Church and State, it was not indifferent to him that it should be known that he had not all his life been addicted to this kind of work, and did not even now regard it as the most natural and congenial to him. At all events, in the autumn of 1645, just about the time of Milton's removal from the house in Aldersgate Street to that in Barbican, steps were taken for the publication of his collected poems. The agent in this interesting event was not any of the publishers of his prose pamphlets, but a certain Humphrey Moseley, then the most active publisher in London of poetry, old plays, and works of pure fancy. He had recently published a collection of the poems of Edmund Waller; and, having found that speculation successful, and being a man of superior taste, he had applied to Milton to furnish him with matter for a similar volume. We have Moseley's own word for the fact that it was at *his* request that Milton agreed to the publication.

First Edition of the Poems: 1645.

Under the date Oct. 6, 1645, this entry occurs in the books of the London Stationers' Company: "*Mr. Moseley entered for his copie, under the hand of Sir Nath. Brent and both the Wardens, a booke called Poems in English and Latyn by Mr. John Milton, 6d.*" The meaning of the entry is that on that day Moseley registered the forthcoming volume as his copyright, showing Brent's licence for its publication, and the signatures

of the Wardens of the Company besides, and paying sixpence for the formality. The following is the complete title of the volume when it did appear :—

"Poems of Mr. John Milton, both English and Latin, compos'd at several times. Printed by his true Copies. The Songs were set in Musick by Mr. Henry Lawes, gentleman of the King's Chappel, and one of His Majesties private Musick.

'——— Baccare frontem
Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro.'
VIRGIL, Eclog. 7.

Printed and publish'd according to Order. London, Printed by Ruth Raworth, for Humphrey Moseley, and are to be sold at the signe of the Princes Arms in S. Paul's Churchyard. 1645."

From a copy of this first edition of Milton's Poems among the King's Pamphlets in the British Museum, bearing a note of the precise day of its publication written on its title-page, I learn that the day was Jan. 2, 1645-6. Milton had then been some months in his new house in Barbican, where, besides his pupils, there were now domiciled with him his reconciled wife, his aged father (who, however, did not long survive this date), and several of his wife's relations. It was ten months since the last two of his Divorce pamphlets—the *Tetrachordon* and the *Colasterion*—had been issued; but the sound of them was still abroad in the world, and cries of execration against Milton on account of them were reaching him in his new home. Let the reader note the secret allusion to this in the motto from Virgil placed on the title-page of the volume of Poems. "Lest evil talk should injure the future poet," is the meaning of that motto, "surround his brow even now with some green thing." This corroborates what we have been saying as to Milton's probable purpose in then bringing out a collection of his early poems. These were not, he seems to say, the best in this kind that he hoped to give to the world; they were a promise only of the future; but, as tongues were busy about him on account of writings of his of a different order, and as the peculiar reputation of these writings might raise a preconception against him in another character in which he meant yet to come forth, he had hastened to prove, by this particular volume from Moseley's press, that he had already some claims in that character, dating from long before his less popular appearances in public politics.

The volume published by Moseley is a small, and rather neat, octavo of more than 200 pages. The English Poems come first and fill 120 pages; after which, with a separate title-page, and filling 88 pages, separately numbered, come the Latin Poems. The poems contained in the volume, whether in the Engl sh or the Latin portion, include, with two exceptions, all those which have been registered in our successive lists in this Introduction as written by Milton, at different periods, from his boyhood at St. Paul's School to the year 1645, in which the volume was published. The exceptions are the little elegy "On the death of a fair Infant dying of a Cough" (1626) and the curious little fragment, "At a Vacation Exercise in the College" (1628). It is to be supposed that these two English pieces, both belonging to the Cambridge period of Milton's life, were not then among Milton's papers, or that copies of them had been mislaid. But, these excepted, every other scrap mentioned in our lists was printed. Nay, Milton was careful to give his volume every chance of a good reception. Prefixed to the volume as a whole, and doubtless with Milton's sanction, was a very eulogistic preface by Moseley, entitled "The Stationer to the Reader" (see it at the beginning of the Minor Poems). Then, before *Comus*, which begins on p. 67 of the volume, there is a separate title-page, as if to call attention to its greater length and importance—besides which, Lawes's eulogistic dedication of this poem to Lord Brackley, in his separate edition of 1637, is reproduced, and the Poem is farther introduced by a copy, furnished by Milton, of Sir Henry Wotton's remarkable letter to him in 1638. Finally, prefixed to the Latin Poems in the volume, after the separate title-page which distinguishes them from the English portion, are copies of the commendatory verses, &c., with which Milton had been favoured when abroad by the distinguished foreigners who had seen some of these poems, or otherwise become acquainted with him. First we have Manso's elegiac Latin distich; then Salsilli's four Latin lines; then Selvaggi's Latin distich; then the long Italian ode by the Florentine poet, Francini; and, lastly, the Latin prose letter of Carlo Dati. The whole collection of testimonies is prefaced by a few Latin words from Milton's own pen, disclaiming the excessive praises there bestowed upon him, but saying that never-

theless, on account of his own regard for their givers, and by the advice of friends, he had concluded to publish them. All this receives explanation from what has been already said as to Milton's motive for bringing out the volume at this particular time. Only in one other peculiarity of the volume, susceptible of a similar explanation, was there a miscarriage. It had been proposed, apparently by Moseley, that there should be a portrait of Milton prefixed to the volume; and to this arrangement Milton, who had no reason to be ashamed of his personal appearance, seems to have consented. Unfortunately, however, the result was a ludicrous failure. The engraver to whom Moseley had entrusted the thing was one W. Marshall, who had executed other portraits of men of the day, and was of some respectability in his profession. Marshall might have had a good copy to work from in the oil-painting then in Milton's possession, and from which there have been many engravings since, representing the poet at about his twenty-first year, when he was a Cambridge student. But, whether he aimed at an adaptation of this, or only concocted something out of his own head, the print which he produced bore no earthly resemblance to Milton, or indeed to any possible human being. Though entitled "*Joannis Miltoni Angli Effigies anno ætatis vigess. pri.*" ("Portrait of John Milton, Englishman, in the 21st year of his age"), it exhibited a stolid, grim-looking, long-haired gentleman, of about fifty, with a background of trees and a meadow, a shepherd piping, and a shepherd and shepherdess dancing. What Milton thought when this engraving of himself was shown him we can only guess. But, instead of having it cancelled, he let it go forth with the volume—only taking his revenge by a practical joke at the engraver's expense. He offered him, or Moseley, some lines of Greek verse to be engraved ornamentally under the portrait; and these lines the poor artist did innocently engrave, little thinking what they meant. They are to be seen in all copies of the portrait to this day, and are as follows:

Ἀμαθεῖ γεγράφθαι χειρὶ τήνδε μὲν εἰκόνα
Φαίης τάχ᾽ ἂν, πρὸς εἶδος αὐτοφυὲς βλέπων.
Τὸν δ᾽ ἐκτυπωτὸν οὐκ ἐπιγνόντες, φίλοι,
Γελᾶτε φαύλου δυσμίμημα ζωγράφου.

An English translation may run thus—

That an unskilful hand had carved this print
You'd say at once, seeing the living face;
But, finding here no jot of me, my friends,
Laugh at the wretched artist's mis-attempt.

Such was the First Edition of Milton's Miscellaneous Poems, published in 1645, when the author was thirty-seven years of age. The volume seems to have had no great circulation; but it sufficed to keep alive, for the next two-and-twenty years, or till the publication of *Paradise Lost* in 1667, the recollection that the man who, through this long period, was becoming more and more known for his Revolutionary principles and his connexion with the Commonwealth government, had begun life as a poet.

Fifteen Years of continued London Citizenship: 1645—1660.

During these fifteen years we find Milton still mainly in London, but several times changing his place of residence. In 1647 he removed from his house in the Barbican to a smaller house in Holborn, opening backward into Lincoln's Inn Fields. Here he still continued to take pupils; and here, after the execution of the King and the establishment of the Council of State, he added to his already numerous prose-pamphlets the first of that new series which defended the act of Regicide and the new Government founded on it. This literary service leading to his appointment to the Latin Secretaryship to the Council of State (March 1648–9), he ceased to take pupils, and came to reside nearer the scene of his official duties. From Nov. 1649 to about the middle of 1651 he was accommodated with official lodgings in Scotland Yard, Whitehall; after which he settled in the house in Petty France, Westminster (see Introd. to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 50–52, and Note there), which he occupied till close on the Restoration. It was in his lodgings in Whitehall, or during the first years of his residence in the house in Petty France, that he wrote the rest of the tracts of his Regicide series, English and

Latin, including those "Defences of the English People" with the fame of which all Europe rang from side to side. It was his labours on these that brought on his blindness, which calamity became total in the year 1652, when he had been but a few months in the house in Petty France. Here also the death of his first wife left him, in 1652 or 1653, a widower with three young daughters; and here took place his second marriage, with one Catharine Woodcock, the daughter of a Captain Woodcock of Hackney—terminated, after a little more than a year of wedded happiness (Nov. 1656—Feb. 1657-8) by her death in childbirth. Before this second marriage Milton's blindness had disabled him for much of his official duty; but he continued to act as Latin Secretary through Cromwell's Protectorate so far as to write the most important of Cromwell's despatches to foreign courts. It was in his comparative leisure towards the end of the Protectorate, as we have seen (Introd. to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 50—52), that he resumed, in his house in Petty France, his long-deferred poetic designs, and commenced *Paradise Lost*. Cromwell's death in 1658, and the confusion consequent on his son's Protectorate, interrupted that undertaking; and the last public appearances of Milton before the Restoration were in tracts trying to avert that issue, and induce England to remain a Republic.

Did Milton, during these fifteen years of his continued political activity, and his Latin Secretaryship, abstain from verse entirely until he began his *Paradise Lost*, or did he pen during this period minor pieces of verse, to be added to the collection published in 1645? A few, but only a few; and most, if not all, of these written before 1658—after which date Milton, having commenced his *Paradise Lost*, seems to have reserved his whole metrical force for it. The following is a complete list of these new pieces. They may be fancied as written at intervals, if the reader chooses to allocate them by their dates, in the following houses—that in the Barbican (from 1645 to 1647); that in Holborn, open at the back to Lincoln's Inn Fields (from 1647 to Nov. 1649); the official lodgings in Scotland Yard, Whitehall (from Nov. 1649 to July 1651); and the house in Petty France, Westminster (from July 1651 to 1660).

I. ENGLISH :—

Thirteen SONNETS ; viz.—

"On the Detraction which followed upon my writing certain Treatises" (*i.e.* his Divorce Pamphlets). Sonnet beginning, "A Book was writ of late called Tetrachordon." 1645.

"On the same." Sonnet beginning, "I did but prompt the age." 1645.

"To Mr. H. Lawes, on his Airs." Sonnet beginning, "Harry, whose tuneful." 1646.

"On the Religious Memory of Mrs. Catharine Thomson, my Christian Friend, deceased 16 September, 1646." Sonnet beginning, "When Faith and Love."

"On the Loid General Fairfax." Sonnet beginning, "Fairfax, whose name in arms." 1648.

"To the Lord General Cromwell, May 16, 1652, on the Proposals of certain Ministers at the Committee for Propagation of the Gospel." Sonnet beginning, "Cromwell, our chief of men."

"To Sir Henry Vane, the younger." Sonnet beginning, "Vane, young in years."

"On the late Massacre in Piedmont." Sonnet beginning, "Avenge, O Lord." 1655.

Sonnet on his Blindness, beginning, "When I consider."

To Mr. Lawrence. Sonnet beginning, "Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son."

To Cyriack Skinner. Sonnet beginning, "Cyriack, whose grandsire."

Second Sonnet to Cyriack Skinner, beginning, "Cyriack, this three-years-day." 1655.

To the Memory of his Second Wife. Sonnet beginning, "Methought I saw." 1658.

Lines entitled, "ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT."

TRANSLATIONS :—

Some scraps of verse, translated from classic and other writers, to garnish the text of some of the prose-pamphlets.

"The Fifth Ode of Horace, Lib. I., *Quis multa gracilis*, &c., rendered almost word for word, without rhyme, according to the Latin measure, as near as the language will permit."

"Nine of the Psalms done into metre, wherein all but what is in a different character are in the very words of the text, translated from the original:" April 1648. To wit, Psalms LXXX.—LXXXVIII.

Eight more of the Psalms, translated Aug. 1653 ; to wit, Psalms I.—VIII.

II. Latin:—

"Ad Joannem Rousium, Oxoniensis Academiæ Bibliothecarium: De libro Poematum amisso, quem ille sibi denuo mitti postulabat, ut cum aliis nostris in Bibliothecâ publicâ reponeret, Ode." (Among the Sylvæ.) Jan. 23. 1646–7.

"Apologus de Rustico et Hero." (Among the Elegies.)

A scrap or two of Latin Epigram, introduced into his Latin prose-pamphlets; also Epigram, "Ad Christinam, Suecorum Reginam, nomine Cromwelli," if that be really Milton's, and not Marvell's.

Last Fourteen Years of Milton's Life: 1660—1674.

Second Edition of the Poems (1673).

The incidents of Milton's life from the eve of the Restoration in 1660 to the publication of his *Paradise Lost* in 1667 have already been sketched in the Introduction to that Poem (pp. 50 *et seq.*). They comprised his flight from his house in Petty France, and his temporary concealment; his reappearance, when danger was over, in a house in Holborn, near Red Lion Fields; his removal thence, in 1661, to Jewin Street, in his old and favourite neighbourhood of Aldersgate Street, where he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull; and his final removal, in 1663 or 1664, to the last of all his residences on earth—that in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields. It was thence that *Paradise Lost*, which he had begun in 1658, was given to the world in 1667.

Paradise Lost was followed, in 1671, by *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, published together; and the popularity of these three great poems of Milton's later years seems to have reawakened so much demand for his earlier Poems as to make a new edition of them desirable. Accordingly, in 1673, or eighteen years after Moseley had published the first edition, a second edition of the Minor Poems did appear, under Milton's own superintendence. This second edition, which, like the first, was a small octavo, bore the following title:—

"Poems, &c., upon Several Occasions. | By Mr. John Milton: both English and Latin, &c. Composed at several times. | With a small Tractate of Education. To Mr. Hartlib. London, Printed for Tho. Dring, at the White Lion, next Chancery Lane End, in Fleet Street. 1673." [So in copies which I have

seen; but in a copy now before me the latter part of the imprint runs thus:—"London: Printed for Tho. Dring, at the Blew Anchor next Mitre Court over against Fetter Lane in Fleet Street. 1673."]

In this second edition, as compared with the first, the following particulars are to be noted: (1) There are certain *additions*. The chief of these (not to mention the reprint, at the end, of the small prose Tract on Education which had been originally published in 1644), are, of course, those English and Latin pieces of which we have just given a list as having been written by Milton after the first edition was published. But *all* these pieces, written between 1645 and 1673, were *not* included in the new edition. The few English and Latin scraps already printed in the prose-writings were not here reprinted; and, for reasons obvious enough, Milton did not think it advisable, at that date, to publish his sonnets to Fairfax, Vane, and Cromwell, nor that second one to Cyriack Skinner in which he speaks with exultation of his own services in the Republican cause. With these exceptions, however, all the pieces written since 1645 were now published by Milton himself in this second edition. But there were also included in this edition those two English pieces, which, though written long before the publication of the first edition, had not appeared in it (see p. 167)—viz. the Elegy "On the death of a fair Infant dying of a Cough," written in 1626, and the fragment, "At a Vacation Exercise in the College," written in 1628. Copies of these two pieces had apparently been recovered by Milton, and their insertion in the new edition was certainly a gain to that edition. (2) To some copies of this second edition of the Poems there was prefixed a new portrait of Milton at the age of sixty-three, by W. Dolle, after Faithorne, superseding the caricature by Marshall prefixed to the first edition. But the jocular Greek lines on Marshall's portrait which had appeared in the first edition were still preserved. They were printed among the Sylvæ in the new edition, with the title "In Effigiei ejus Sculptorem." (3) From the new edition were *omitted* Moseley's Preface to the first edition, and also the two pieces of English prose which had been specially inserted in the first as introductions to the *Comus*—viz. Lawes's Dedication of the *Comus* to Lord Brackley in 1637, and Sir Henry Wotton's letter of 1638. Milton probably thought that these

laudatory introductions were no longer required. He still kept, however, the complimentary verses, &c., of his foreign friends, prefixed to the Latin poems.

Subsequent Editions of the Poems.

Milton survived the publication of the second edition of his Minor Poems only a few months. He died Nov. 8, 1674, one of his last occupations having been the preparation of the second edition of his *Paradise Lost.* We do not find that, after his death, the Minor Poems were in such demand as the others. It was not till 1695—by which time *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes* had passed through several new editions—that there was published a *third* edition of the miscellaneous poems. This edition was published by Tonson in sixty folio pages, besides title-page and table of contents, as a companion to the folio editions of *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson*, published at the same time; with which, accordingly, it is usually found bound up. The example thus set, of reprinting the Minor Poems along with the larger in general editions of Milton's Poetical Works, has been generally followed. Bishop Newton followed it in 1752, by issuing *Paradise Regained*, *Samson*, and the Minor Poems together in one volume, to be added to his two-volume edition of the *Paradise Lost* in 1749, and so complete the Poetical Works. Separate editions of the Minor Poems have been very few. By far the most important of these few were the two editions, in 1785 and 1791 respectively, by Thomas Warton, "with notes critical and explanatory, and other illustrations." Warton's notes in these editions were most careful and valuable; and Todd and other subsequent editors and biographers of Milton have been greatly indebted to them. Todd's own editing of the Minor Poems, after Warton, was not without good results; and in Mr. Keightley's edition of Milton (1859) there is evidence of real pains bestowed upon the Minor Poems. The same cannot be said of the handsome eight-volume edition of Milton from Pickering's press in 1851, with life by Mitford. Not only are the Minor Poems printed there without the original prefaces, &c., of

the edition of 1645, but they are printed in an arbitrary order, which is neither that of the original edition, nor intelligible in itself.

To most of the editions of the Minor Poems that have appeared since Milton's own second edition of 1673 there have, of course, been added such scraps of verse, not inserted in that edition, as Milton would himself have included in any final edition. Thus the scraps of verse, whether in English or Latin, interspersed through his prose-writings, are now properly collected and inserted among the Poems. Those four English Sonnets, also, which Milton had, from prudential reasons, omitted in the edition of 1673, though they were then by him (see *antè*, p. 173), are now in their places. After the Revolution of 1688 there was no reason for withholding these interesting sonnets from the public; and, accordingly, when Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, published, in 1694, an English edition of the "Letters of State" which had been written by his uncle as Latin Secretary during the Commonwealth, and prefixed to these Letters his memoir of his uncle, he very properly printed the four missing sonnets as an appendix to the memoir. From that time they have always been included in editions of the Poems.

The Milton MSS. at Cambridge.

Even had Milton not given his Minor Poems to the world in print during his lifetime, those interesting productions of his genius would, perhaps, not have been wholly lost. Some of them would have remained recoverable. It is at this point, and more especially in connexion with the Minor Poems, that the reader ought to have a particular account of those Cambridge MSS. of Milton which have been several times referred to in the course of our Introductions, and which are by far the most interesting of the personal relics of the poet.

Milton, from the time when he had first begun to write poems or other things, had carefully kept the MSS. In particular, there was a folio-sized notebook, or set of loose folio sheets, in which, from the last years of his student-life at Cambridge, on through his subsequent period of rural leisure at Horton, and again after

his return from his Italian tour, he was accustomed to keep the first drafts of his English pieces, or copies of them. This book, or set of sheets (with other notebooks or sets of sheets, in which he had kept his Latin pieces, and also some others of his English), had served him in 1645, when Moseley brought out, "printed by his true copies," the first edition of his miscellaneous Poems. The "true copies," however, used by Moseley's printer, were not the drafts in this original MS. book or set of sheets, but amended copies from these made on purpose. The original MS. book or set of sheets remained in Milton's possession, and was occasionally used by him to receive fresh jottings till as late as 1658—the latest jottings, however, not being in his own hand, but in the hands of the various amanuenses whom he employed in his blindness. These and other MSS. of Milton, descending to his widow, after his death in 1674, became dispersed on, if not before, her removal from London to her native place, Nantwich in Cheshire, where she died in 1727. What became of the bulk of the manuscripts is unknown ; but the portion of them in which we are now interested came somehow into the hands of a Sir Henry Newton Puckering, Baronet. He was the son of a Sir Adam Newton, who had been tutor to Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I., but he had taken the name of Puckering after his uncle, a Sir Thomas Puckering, of Warwickshire. It is just possible that he may have had some acquaintance with Milton. He had been educated at Trinity College, Cambridge; and I find that his uncle and aunt had been neighbours of Milton in Aldersgate Street. At all events, he was a scholar and a book-collector. So scholarly were his tastes, and so strong was his affection for his old college in Cambridge, that, in his eightieth year (about 1697), he desired to be readmitted into it, and had rooms in it assigned him, where he lived for some time. At his death in 1700, he left his collection of books, amounting to 4,000 volumes, to Trinity College Library. In this collection were many MSS., and among them such of Milton's as had come into the old collector's possession. These precious documents lay neglected among the other MSS. till Charles Mason, a Fellow of the College, and subsequently Woodwardian Professor in the University, took the pains to seek them out and arrange them. Finally, in 1736, another Fellow of

the College—Thomas Clarke, afterwards Knight, and Master of the Rolls—had them carefully and handsomely bound in morocco in a thin folio volume, with this inscription pasted on the inside of one of the covers, "*Membra hæc eruditissimi et pæne divini Poetæ, olim miserè disjecta et passim sparsa, postea verò fortuito inventa, et in unum denuo collecta a Carolo Mason, ejusdem Collegii socio, et inter Miscellanea reposita, deinceps eâ quâ decuit religione servari voluit Thomas Clarke, nuperrimè hujusce Collegii, nunc verò Medii Templi Londini, Socius.* 1736." ("These relics of a most learned and almost divine poet, formerly miserably torn asunder and everywhere dispersed, but afterwards by chance found, and latterly collected into one by Charles Mason, Fellow of the same College, and placed among the Miscellanies of the Library, are now at length to be preserved with becoming piety by the desire of Thomas Clarke, very recently Fellow of this College, and now of the Middle Temple, London. 1736.") Accordingly, this thin morocco-bound volume of Milton MSS. is to this day one of the most precious curiosities in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. It is shown to visitors in a glass table-case, arranged so as to gratify them with the sight of a page or two of Milton's autograph. By permission of the Master and Fellows, but only in the presence of one of the Fellows, it may be removed from the case for more leisurely examination. A full account of the volume, and ample specimens of it in fac-simile, will be found in the late Mr. Sotheby's splendid folio volume entitled *Ramblings in the Elucidation of Milton's Autograph* (1861). It is only to be regretted that Mr. Sotheby, while he was about it, did not fac-simile the volume entire.

The volume consists of fifty-four pages, all of folio size, except an interpolated leaf or two of small quarto. Eight of the pages are blank; all the other forty-six are written on, most of them very closely. The following is an inventory of the contents of the whole volume in the order in which they stand as bound up by Clarke in 1736 :—

MATTER AND HANDWRITING.

PAGES	
1—3	Draft of the ARCADES *in Milton's own hand.*
4—5	"SONG, AT A SOLEMN MUSIC." Three Drafts (two of them erased) *in Milton's own hand.*
6—7	PROSE LETTER TO A FRIEND, written in or about Dec. 1631, while Milton was still at Cambridge, giving his reasons for hesitating to enter the Church or any other profession. There are two drafts of the letter—the first draft containing the SONNET ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE, inserted into the prose; the second draft containing a blank space for the Sonnet. Both the Sonnet and the two prose drafts are *in Milton's own hand.*
8	"ON TIME: *to be set on a Clock-case:*" *in Milton's own hand* (apparently a transcript from a former copy).
,,	"UPON THE CIRCUMCISION:" *in Milton's own hand* (apparently a transcript from a former copy).
9	SONNET beginning, "Captain or Colonel" (1642): *in another hand* (boyish-looking), save that the title "*When the assault was intended to ye citty*" is written in Milton's own hand, in lieu of this title, first written, but afterwards erased, "*On his Dore when ye citty expected an assault.*"
,,	SONNET, "*To a Lady,*" beginning, "Lady that in the prime" (1644): *in Milton's own hand.*
,,	SONNET, "*To the Lady Margaret Ley,*" beginning, "Daughter to that good Earl" (1644): *in Milton's own hand.*
10—12	These three pages are blank.
13—29	COMUS (1634), much corrected throughout: all *in Milton's own hand.*
30—34	LYCIDAS (1637), with corrections throughout: all *in Milton's own hand*
35—41	These seven pages are occupied with those JOTTINGS OF SUBJECTS, AND SKETCHES OF SUBJECTS, FOR SCRIPTURAL TRAGEDIES AND TRAGEDIES OF BRITISH HISTORY, to which such frequent reference has been made (see Vol. I., Introduction to *Paradise Lost,* pp. 40—48; and Vol. II., Introduction to *Paradise Regained,* pp. 1—14, and Introduction to *Samson Agonistes,* pp. 85—94). The Jottings are wholly *in Milton's own hand,* and were made, it can be proved, in 1640–42.
42	This page is blank.
43	SONNET TO HENRY LAWES: two drafts—one headed, "*To my freind, Mr. Hen. Laws, Feb.* 9, 1645," and signed "*J. M.*" (which draft is erased); the other headed, "*To Mr. Hen. Laws, on the publishing of his Aires*" (1645–6). Heading of the second draft in another hand; but both drafts and first heading *in Milton's own hand.*

PAGES

43 SONNET, "*On the Detraction which followed upon my writing certaine Treatises*"—that one of the two under this title which begins "I did but prompt the age" (1645): *in Milton's own hand.*

44 SONNET, "*On the Religious Memorie of Mrs. Catharine Thomson, my Christian friend, deceased* 16 *December*, 1646"—*i.e.* Sonnet, beginning, "When Faith and Love:" two drafts, both *in Milton's own hand;* the first erased.

45, 46 These two pages consist of an interpolated leaf of small quarto, containing transcripts, *in another hand*, of the three Sonnets last named, together with a transcript, in the same hand, of the Sonnet immediately following on p. 47—*i.e.* the Sonnet beginning, "A Book was writ of late," which now appears as one of the two under the common title, "*On the detraction,*" &c., but which has in this transcript a separate heading, "*On the reception his Book of Divorce met with.*" The four Sonnets, though here transcribed in this order, have numbers prefixed to them, showing in what order Milton, when the transcript was made, meant them to be printed. The Sonnet, "I did but prompt the age," is marked to come first, as No. 11 of the entire series of the Sonnets up to that date; then the Sonnet, "A Book was writ of late," as No. 12; then the Sonnet to Lawes, as No. 13; and lastly, the Sonnet to the Memory of Mrs. Catharine Thomson, as No. 14.

47 SONNET, "A Book was writ of late" (1645 or 1646); being the draft *in Milton's own hand* (with corrections in another) of which there is a transcript as above.

SONNET TO FAIRFAX (1648): *in Milton's own hand*, with this title erased, "*On ye Lord Gen. Fairfax at ye Seige of Colchester.*"

SONNET TO CROMWELL (1652): *in another hand;* dictated by Milton.

48 SONNET TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER: *in another hand;* dictated by Milton.

Lines ON THE FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE: *in another hand.* A note in Milton's hand in the preceding page directs that these lines come in immediately before the Sonnet to Fairfax.

49 Last ten lines of the first SONNET TO CYRIACK SKINNER: *in another hand.*

Second SONNET TO CYRIACK SKINNER, beginning, "Cyriack, this three years' day" (1655 ?): *in another hand;* dictated by Milton.

50 SONNET TO THE MEMORY OF HIS SECOND WIFE, beginning, "Methought I saw" (1658): *in another hand;* dictated by Milton.

51—54 These last four pages are blank.

It thus appears that in this precious volume at Cambridge there are preserved (mostly in Milton's own hand, but occasionally in the

hands of amanuenses, who either transcribed from his original drafts before he was blind, or, after he was blind, wrote to his dictation) actual MS. copies of all Milton's MINOR ENGLISH POEMS, with these exceptions:—*Paraphrases of Psalms CXIV. and CXXXVI.*; *On the Death of a Fair Infant*; *At a Vacation Exercise*; *On the Nativity*; *The Passion*; *On a May Morning*; *On Shakespeare*; *On the University Carrier* (two pieces); *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester*; *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso*; *Four of the Sonnets* ("O Nightingale," "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont," "When I consider how my light is spent," "To Mr. Lawrence"); *Translation of the Fifth Ode of Horace*; *Translations of Psalms I.—VIII.* (done in 1653), *and of Psalms LXXX.—LXXXVIII.* (done in 1648); and *Scraps of Verse in the Prose Pamphlets.*

RULES FOR DECIDING THE TEXT.

An editor's duty, in respect to the text of the Minor Poems of Milton, resolves itself into the following rules:—(1) The great majority of the poems, appearing both in the edition of 1645 and in that of 1673, are to be printed according to the text of these editions, wherever it is common to the two; and, if in any case there is a discrepancy, then the text of 1673 is to have the preference, except where it may appear that the difference between that and the text of 1645 is a mere error in reprinting. For, on the one hand, there is evidence that Milton dictated amendments for the later edition, and intended it to be adopted; and, on the other hand, there is the fact that he could revise the proofs of the earlier edition with his own eyes, but could not give the later the same benefit. Between the two editions, however, there is next to no difficulty; and these between them must fix the text of the poems common to both. Whatever *other* copies of these poems exist—whether among the Cambridge MSS., or (as in the cases of *Comus* and *Lycidas*) also in a printed form prior to the volumes of 1645 and 1673—are to be looked upon only as earlier drafts which were superseded, in Milton's own intention, by these printed volumes. (2) Where a poem appears in the volume of 1673, but not in that of 1645, then, on the same principle, it is the text of 1673, and

not that of any earlier draft found among the Cambridge MSS., that is to be followed. (3) As respects the few pieces not found in either of Milton's own editions of 1645 and 1673, but added by subsequent editors, the rule might at first sight seem to divide itself. The scraps of verse culled from Milton's prose-pamphlets are, of course, to be printed from the text of the pamphlets in which they occur; but what is the proper text of the four Sonnets first published by Phillips in his memoir of Milton—to wit, the Sonnets to Fairfax, Vane and Cromwell, and the second Sonnet to Cyriack Skinner? There are drafts of these Sonnets, though only one of them in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.; and these drafts differ a good deal from the copies printed by Phillips. Which text is to be followed? At first, though aware that Phillips was not the most accurate of men, I was disposed to assign some value to his text of the four Sonnets, on the supposition that he may have had copies later than those in the Cambridge MSS., and also because, in at least one instance, he has furnished a better reading, which has been generally adopted. But a close comparison of Phillips's text throughout with that of the MSS. has convinced me that Newton and subsequent editors have been right in abiding by the MS. copies. In most cases of difference, even where Phillips's readings would do, the MS. readings are better. But there are one or two cases where Phillips has reverted to a reading forbidden in the MSS. by actual rejection and erasure; and in the Sonnet to Cromwell he has ruined the metrical structure by the omission of a whole line, patching up the break as well as he could so as to preserve the continuity of the sense. For the four Sonnets in question, therefore, the Cambridge MSS. must be authoritative, while Phillips's variations may interest in the Notes. (4) From all that has been said it does not follow that no editorial use is to be made of the Cambridge MSS. except for the four Sonnets last spoken of, or that no use is to be made of the very early printed copies of *Comus* and *Lycidas* in 1637 and 1638 respectively. On the contrary, it is peculiarly interesting to compare these earlier drafts of some of the poems with the copies as finally perfected, and to obtain the insight so afforded into Milton's habits of composition, and the critical fastidiousness with which,

in each revision of any of his poems, he sought improvements in words or in sound. Hence, in connexion with any of the poems of which there is a draft among the Cambridge MSS., an editor, though precluded from letting that draft affect the printed text of the editions of 1645 and 1673, may, with advantage, give a conspectus in his notes of the various readings supplied by the draft: not only of such various readings as are supplied by the draft in its final state, but even of such as are supplied by the erasures and changes in the MS. itself before that state was reached. Milton erased and changed so much in the act of writing that it is impossible to give an adequate idea of his habits in this respect except by actually reproducing the Cambridge MSS. in fac-simile. That labour, performed only in part by the late Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby, may yet be performed completely. Meanwhile, an editor must do his best to supply the want by indicating what is of importance in the form of various readings found in the Cambridge drafts. In the cases of *Comus* and *Lycidas*, and especially, as we shall find, in that of *Comus*, something more may be required.

INTRODUCTIONS TO THE POEMS SEVERALLY.

The Poems divide themselves in this edition, as in Milton's own editions, into two sets :—THE ENGLISH POEMS (with which go five Italian Sonnets and one Italian Canzone); and THE LATIN POEMS (with which go three scraps of Greek). We shall divide our Introductions to the Poems correspondingly into two Parts, as follows :—

PART I.—THE ENGLISH POEMS.

PART II.—THE LATIN POEMS.

INTRODUCTIONS TO THE POEMS SEVERALLY.

PART I.

THE ENGLISH POEMS.

THE following is the order of the English Poems as published by Milton himself in the editions of 1645 and 1673, an asterisk being prefixed to those which appeared first in the later edition :—

"ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY," with "THE HYMN."
"A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXIV."
"A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXXXVI."
* "ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT DYING OF A COUGH."
"THE PASSION."
"ON TIME."
"UPON THE CIRCUMCISION."
"AT A SOLEMN MUSIC."
"AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER."
"SONG ON MAY MORNING."
"ON SHAKESPEARE."
"ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER."
"ANOTHER ON THE SAME."
"L'ALLEGRO."
"IL PENSEROSO."
"SONNETS :"—
I. "O Nightingale."
II. "*Donna leggiadra.*"
III. "*Qual in colle aspro.*"
"Canzone."
IV. "*Diodati, e te'l dirò.*"
V. "*Per certo.*"
VI. "*Giovane piano.*"
VII. "How soon hath Time."

VIII. "Captain or Colonel."
IX. "Lady, that in the prime."
X. "Daughter to that good Earl."
* XI. "A Book was writ of late."
* XII. "I did but prompt the age."
* XIII. "Harry, whose tuneful."
* XIV. "When Faith and Love."
* XV. "Avenge, O Lord."
* XVI. "When I consider how."
* XVII. "Lawrence, of virtuous Father."
* XVIII. "Cyriack, whose grandsire."
* XIX. "Methought I saw."

* "THE FIFTH ODE OF HORACE, *Lib. I.*, ENGLISHED."
* "AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE."
* "ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT."
"ARCADES."
"LYCIDAS."
COMUS: "A MASK PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634."
* TRANSLATIONS OF PSALMS I.—VIII.
* TRANSLATIONS OF PSALMS LXXX.—LXXXVIII.

English pieces which did not appear in either of Milton's own editions of his Poems, but have been added in later editions, to complete the collection, are the following :—

Four SONNETS :—
Sonnet to Fairfax, beginning "Fairfax, whose name."
Sonnet to Cromwell, beginning "Cromwell, our chief of men."
Sonnet to Sir Henry Vane the younger, beginning "Vane, young in years."
Second Sonnet to Cyriack Skinner, beginning "Cyriack, this three-years'-day."

SCRAPS OF VERSE FROM THE PROSE PAMPHLETS.

It is difficult to see on what principle Milton arranged the English pieces in his editions of 1645 and 1673. In some degree, however, he attended to chronological order, making the more juvenile pieces, on the whole, precede the later. For example, though the piece *At a Vacation Exercise in the College*, which is one of the interpolations in the second edition, actually occupies pp. 64—68 of that edition, there is a statement in the "Errata" to the effect that it is out of its place there, and should have followed immediately after the Elegy *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, which ends at p. 21. The association thus signified in Milton's mind

between the two pieces is clearly one of time: both pieces belonging to his Cambridge days. And, on the whole, though in neither edition is the chronological principle of arrangement paramount, one can see that a subordinate respect is paid to it. The state of the case may be described by saying that in both editions we see a tendency to the chronological arrangement, interfered with by such motives as might induce an author or a publisher to depart from it in bringing out a volume of poems. There was the desire, for example, to open the volume, not with a slight piece, but with a poem, like that on the Nativity, giving a sufficient foretaste of the author's quality; and there was care also to give due mechanical prominence in the sequel to such considerable poems as *Lycidas* and *Comus.*

As these reasons, however, need not actuate an editor of Milton now, and as a reprint of the poems in the exact order of the edition of 1673 would on other grounds be confusing, it seems desirable, in an edition like the present, to adopt throughout that chronological principle of arrangement which Milton did to some extent mark with his approval. For all purposes of a study of Milton this principle is the best, and for no purpose is it inconvenient. As far as may be, accordingly, the arrangement of the minor English poems in this volume is chronological. The deviations are where certain of the poems go naturally in groups. Thus, instead of scattering the SONNETS through the rest of the poems by placing each particular Sonnet in its own chronological niche, it has been deemed best to keep all the Sonnets together, arranged chronologically in their series. For a similar reason the ARCADES and COMUS are brought close together.

We shall now enumerate and introduce the English Poems successively as they stand in this edition:—

PARAPHRASES ON PSALMS CXIV. AND CXXXVI.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

These were done, as the author himself takes care to tell us, "at fifteen years old"—*i. e.* in 1624. They are, in fact, the only specimens now extant of Milton's muse before he went to Cambridge. They are the relics, doubtless, of a little collection

of boyish performances, now lost, with which he amused himself, and perhaps pleased his father and his teachers, when he lived in his father's house in Bread Street, Cheapside, and attended the neighbouring school of St. Paul's. They prove him to have been even then a careful reader of contemporary English poetry, and, in particular, of Spenser, and of Sylvester's quaint and old-fashioned, but richly poetical, translation of Du Bartas.

Du Bartas, or, to give his name more fully, Guillaume de Salluste, Sieur du Bartas, was a French Protestant soldier and poet (born 1544, died 1590). His great work, left unfinished, was a religious Poem, consisting first of a Description of the Seven Days of Creation, founded on the account of creation in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis, and then of a narrative of Biblical History, from Adam onwards, arranged in seven metaphorical Days, to correspond with the Seven Days of the creative week. It was immensely popular abroad both before and after the author's death, and was translated into many languages. The English translator was Joshua Sylvester (1563–1618), an English Puritan poet of some note by his own writings, who came to be called "Silver-tongued Sylvester." He began the translation of Du Bartas about 1590, and finished it in 1605, when it was published under the title of *Du Bartas: His Divine Weekes and Workes.* The book, which was published by Humphrey Lownes, a well-known printer of Bread Street Hill, close to Milton's father's house, was as popular in England as the original was on the Continent. It went through several editions while Sylvester lived, and almost every pious English household of literary tastes possessed a copy. Dryden tells us that even in his boyhood (about 1650) Sylvester's *Du Bartas* remained a favourite; and Milton's acquaintance with the same book thirty years earlier cannot be doubted. It was first distinctly argued, however, by the Rev. Charles Dunster, in his *Considerations on Milton's Early Reading*, published in 1800.

Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, with all its poetical richness, is a book of quaint, and often uncouth and absurd, taste. But young Milton had a corrective in Spenser. His early familiarity with Spenser might be presumed from the fact that, from Spenser's death in 1599, on for fifty years, the Spenserian influence was all-dominant

in the English world of Poetry, outside the pale of the Drama. But there is more than presumptive proof. Milton's earlier poems are saturated with Spenser; in his manhood he spoke of Spenser with reverence; and, in his later life, he told Dryden that Spenser had been his first master. It may not be unworthy of remark, in this connexion, that Alexander Gill, the head-master of St. Paul's School while Milton was a pupil there, was a devoted admirer of Spenser. This is shown by the number of quotations from Spenser in Gill's *Logonomia Anglica*, a curious English Grammar in Latin, first published in 1619.

On the Death of a Fair Infant dying of a Cough.

(First printed in the Edition of 1673.)

Over this poem Milton has himself placed the words "*Anno ætatis* 17," implying that it was written in his 17th year. Now, as Milton entered his seventeenth year on the 9th of December, 1624, and ended it on the 9th of December, 1625, this would place the poem between these dates. But, when Milton placed Arabic figures after the phrase *anno ætatis* in these headings of his poems, it was his habit, as might be proved in this particular case, and as we shall see indubitably hereafter (Introductions to the second and third of the Latin Elegies and to the first piece in the *Sylvarum Liber*), to give himself the benefit of a year by understanding the figures as noting cardinal and not ordinal numbers. "*Anno ætatis* 17" meant, with him, not strictly "in his seventeenth year," but "at 17 years of age." The present poem, accordingly, was actually written in the winter of 1625-6, or during Milton's second academic year at Cambridge. It is the first of his preserved English pieces of the Cambridge period, but seems to have been written, not *at* Cambridge, but in the course of a brief visit made to London between the Michaelmas Term and the Lent Term of the academic year—*i.e.* between Dec. 16, 1625, and Jan. 13, 1625-6. That the "fair infant" was a little girl we learn from the poem itself; but we are indebted to Phillips, in his memoir of Milton, for the interesting information that the little girl was the poet's own niece. "One of his sister's children, who died

in infancy," are Phillips's words—*i.e.* she was Phillips's own sister, of whom he had heard as born before himself, and cut off in her babyhood. The circumstances, more particularly, are these : —In the course of 1624, or just before Milton had gone to Cambridge, his only surviving sister, Anne Milton, several years older than himself, had been married to a Mr. Edward Phillips, a native of Shrewsbury, but resident in London, where he held a situation in the Crown Office in Chancery, and rose at last to the second place as Deputy Clerk of the Crown. To this couple there had been born, after about a year's marriage, their first child, a little girl, making the young poet an uncle, and his father, the scrivener of Bread Street, a grandfather. When in town from Cambridge, Milton had seen the "fair infant," whether in his father's house in Bread Street, or in his sister's own house, which was "in the Strand, near Charing Cross." But the life of the little creature was to be short. The autumn of 1625 was a particularly unhealthy one in London—the Plague then raging there with such violence that as many as 35,000 persons were said to have died of it during that season within the Bills of Mortality. There is an allusion to this prevalence of the Plague in the last stanza but one of the poem. Not to the Plague, however, but to the general inclemency of the succeeding winter, did the delicate little blossom fall a victim. She died "of a cough"—*i.e.* of some affection of the lungs. This and all the surroundings of the case—the cold, snowy winter, after the autumn of Plague, &c.—are poetically indicated in the beautiful little elegy, with which the young Cambridge student sought to console the sorrowing mother at the time, and which has preserved for us the fact of the existence of this "fair infant" at whom the poet had looked with interest. The poet's sister, Anne Phillips, addressed so affectionately in the last stanza of the poem, had several subsequent children by the same husband—two of whom, Edward and John Phillips, survived to be known in connexion with their uncle. After the death of that husband, which happened while she was still a young woman, she contracted a second marriage with a Mr. Thomas Agar, who had been bred up in the Crown Office in Chancery with Phillips, and who succeeded to Phillips's post in it as Deputy Clerk of the Crown.

At a Vacation Exercise in the College.

(First printed in the Edition of 1673.)

The heading prefixed to this piece by Milton is, more completely, as follows:—"*Anno ætatis* 19: *At a Vacation Exercise in the College, part Latin, part English: the Latin Speeches ended, the English thus began.*" If the phrase "*Anno ætatis* 19" were to be understood strictly, according to modern custom, as meaning "in his nineteenth year," we should have to refer the piece to some time between Dec. 9, 1626, and Dec. 9, 1627. But here again, as in the heading of the preceding poem (see Introduction to it), we have to remember Milton's habit of dating not from the current year of his age, but from the year which he had completed. The piece, in fact, was written in 1628, or during Milton's fourth academic year at Cambridge, and, as the title implies, was but a fragment of a much longer and more composite exercise or discourse, part of which was in Latin, written for some ceremonial at Christ's College in the vacation of that year—*i. e.* after the close of the Easter Term on the 4th of July. Can we restore the fragment to its proper place and connexion? Fortunately, we can; fortunately, for otherwise the drift of the piece and various allusions in it would be unintelligible. The fragment, though printed by Milton himself, as we now have it, separately among his minor English Poems, was originally a part of one of a few curious Latin writings of Milton's College-days, which appear in all collected editions of his prose-works under the title of *Prolusiones Oratoriæ* (*i.e.* Rhetorical Essays), but have been less read, until lately, than any of his literary remains. As the history of these *Prolusiones Oratoriæ* connects itself intimately with the fragment under notice, it must be here told:—

In the year 1674, the last year of Milton's life, when anything bearing the name of the author of *Paradise Lost* was likely to be a fair speculation for a publisher, a certain London bookseller, Brabazon Aylmer, of "The three Pigeons" in Cornhill, brought out a little volume of Milton's "*Epistolæ Familiares*," or Latin Letters to his private friends. It was Aylmer's intention, and

probably Milton's also, to append to these private Latin letters his more important "Letters of State"—*i.e.* the Latin letters of public interest which he had written to foreign princes and governments in his capacity of Secretary to the Council of State of the Commonwealth, and to the Protectors, Oliver and Richard Cromwell. It was found, however, that the authorities then in power—to wit, the Government of Charles II.—would not permit the publication of these obnoxious documents. They remained, in fact, unpublished till 1676, or two years after Milton's death, when they were piratically printed by a bookseller who had got hold of copies. Aylmer was consequently placed in a difficulty. The nature of this difficulty and the way in which he overcame it are stated by him in a Latin preface prefixed in his own name to the little volume which he did publish. "When I found the Familiar "Letters by themselves," he says, "to be somewhat too scanty "for a volume even of limited size, I resolved to treat with the "author through a particular friend of both of us, in order that, "if he chanced to have by him any little matter in the shape of a "treatise, he might not grudge throwing it in, as a make-weight, to "counterbalance the paucity of the Letters, or at least to fill the "blank. He, influenced by the adviser, having turned over his "papers, at last fell upon the accompanying juvenile compositions, "scattered about, some here and others there, and, at my friend's "earnest request, made them over to his discretion. These, there-"fore, when I perceived that, as they were sufficiently approved "by the common friend in whom I trusted, so the author did not "seem to think he ought to be ashamed of them, I have not "hesitated, juvenile though they are, to give to the light—hoping, "as it is very much my interest to do, that they will be found not "less vendible by me than they were originally, when recited, "agreeable to their auditors."

The compositions with which Milton thus obliged Aylmer in his difficulty, and which were published in the same volume with the *Epistolæ Familiares*, were certain Latin College-exercises which had remained among his papers for more than forty years. "*Ejusdem, jam olim in Collegio adolescentis, Prolusiones quædam Oratoriæ,*" is the title given to them in the volume—*i.e.* "*Some Rhetorical Essays of the same author long ago when he was a youth at College.*" The

Essays or *Prolusiones* are seven in number, and are all interesting as throwing light on Milton's career at the University, and as specimens of his Latinity, and his success in those public debates and discussions on scholastic and philosophical topics which formed in those days so important a part of College and University training. "*Utrum Dies an Nox præstantior sit*" ("Whether Day or Night is the more excellent") is the thesis of the first of the Essays; "*De Sphærarum Concentu*" ("Of the Music of the Spheres") is the title of the second; and so on. But the one with which we are immediately concerned here is the sixth, entitled "*In Feriis Æstivis Collegii, sed concurrente, ut solet, totâ fere Academiæ juventute, Oratio: Exercitationes nonnunquam ludicras Philosophiæ studiis non obesse;*" which may be translated thus, "*In the Summer Vacation of the College, but in the presence, as usual, of a concourse of nearly the whole youth of the University, an Oration to this effect: That occasional sportive exercises are not inconsistent with philosophical studies.*" The Essay, as the heading informs us, was an actual speech delivered by Milton in the hall of Christ's College, Cambridge, on an occasion of periodical revel, when not only his fellow-collegians, but a crowd of students from other colleges, were present. Milton had then nearly completed his undergraduate course, and had his degree of B.A. in prospect; and he was probably chosen to lead the revels on account of his pre-eminent reputation among the undergraduates of Christ's. "The revels," we say; for, in reading the speech itself, we become aware that the circumstances were those of some annual academic saturnalia, when the college hall was a scene of festivity, practical joking, and fun of all kinds, and when the president—styled, in academic phrase, "the Father" for the nonce—was expected to enliven the proceedings with a speech full of jests and personalities, and to submit in turn to interruptions, laughter, and outcries from his noisy "sons." Milton, though confessing in the course of his speech that fun was hardly his element, and that his "faculty in festivities and quips" was very slight, seems to have acquitted himself in his character of "Father," or elected master of the revels, with unusual distinction. At all events he took trouble enough. His entire discourse must have taken at least an hour and a half in the delivery. As originally delivered, it consisted of three parts—

first, a serio-comic discourse, in Latin prose, on the theme "*that sportive exercises on occasion are not inconsistent with the studies of Philosophy;*" secondly, a more expressly comic harangue, also in Latin prose, in which he assumes the character of Father of the meeting, addresses his sons jocularly, and leads off the orgy; and, thirdly, a conclusion in English, partly verse and partly prose, consisting of dramatic speeches:—(1) In the opening Latin discourse, besides an interesting discussion of the theme selected, we have Milton thanking his fellow-collegians for the honour done him in making him president on the occasion—an honour which he appreciates the more because he had had reason to fancy that until now he had not been altogether popular with the majority of them. We have also an expression of his exultation, and yet his diffidence, in finding himself in so conspicuous a place in an assembly of "so many men eminent for erudition, and nearly the whole University." (2) In the middle part, or Latin comic harangue, we have, amid many coarse jocosities, and personal allusions to individual fellow-students not now intelligible, the following passage explanatory of what is to follow: "I turn me, "therefore, as Father, to my sons, of whom I behold a goodly "number; and I see too that the mischievous little rogues "acknowledge me to be their father by secretly bobbing their "heads. Do you ask what are to be their names? I will not, "by taking the names of dishes, give my sons to be eaten by "you, for that would be too much akin to the ferocity of Tan-"talus and Lycaon; nor will I designate them by the names of "parts of the body, lest you should think that I had begotten so "many bits of men instead of whole men; nor is it my pleasure "to call them after the kinds of wine, lest what I should say "should be not according to Bacchus. I wish them to be named "according to the number of the Predicaments, that so I may "express their distinguished birth and their liberal manner of life." The meaning of which passage seems to be that it was the custom at such meetings for the "Father" to confer nicknames for the nonce on such of his fellow-students as were more particularly associated with him as his "sons," and, as such, had perhaps to take a prominent part, under him, in the proceedings; and that Milton, instead of following old practice, and calling his sons by

such rigmarole names as *Beef*, *Mutton*, *Pork*, &c. (names of dishes), or *Head*, *Neck*, *Breast*, &c. (names of parts of the body), or *Sack*, *Rhenish*, *Sherris*, &c. (names of wines), proposed to call them after the famous Ten Predicaments or Categories of Aristotle. These Predicaments or Categories—*i. e.* varieties of cogitable existence, or different heads under one or other of which everything must fall that can be made an object of thought or predication by man at all—were all regarded as subdivisions of the one supreme category of ENS or BEING. First ENS was subdivided into the two general categories of *Ens per se* or *Substance*, and *Ens per accidens* or *Accident*. By farther divisions and subdivisions, however, *Accident* was made to split itself into nine subordinate categories—Quantity, Quality, Relation, Action, Passion, Place where, Time when, Posture, and Habit. Prefix to these nine categories, developed out of *Accident*, the one unbroken category of *Substance*, and you have the Ten Aristotelian Categories or Predicaments, once so famous in the schools. What Milton said, therefore, was virtually this :—I, as Father, choose to represent myself as ENS or Being in general, undivided Being; and you, my sons, Messrs. So and So and So and So (to wit, certain students of Christ's acting along with Milton in the farce), are to regard yourselves as respectively Substance, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Action, Passion, Place, Time, Posture, and Habit. Thus I have assigned you your parts in what is to follow of our proceedings. (3) We have here, then, the key to the dramatic speeches in English with which Milton's address was wound up. After apologizing for having detained the audience so long with his Latin harangue, he announces that he is about to break the University statutes (which ordained that all academic discourses, &c., should be in the learned tongues) by "running across" from Latin to English. At this point, therefore, he suddenly exclaims

> "Hail ! native language, that by sinews weak
> Didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak,
> And mad'st," &c.

He continues this episodic address to his native speech through a goodly number of lines, but then remembers that it is a divergence from the business in hand, and that his Sons are waiting to hear him speak in the character of ENS. Accordingly, he

does speak in this character, calling up the eldest of his ten sons, *Substance*, and addressing him in fit terms. Whether *Substance* made any reply we are not informed; but the next two Predicaments, *Quantity* and *Quality*, did speak in their turn—not in verse, however, but in prose. It seems most natural to conclude that these speeches were made by the students of Christ's who represented the Predicaments in question—Milton himself only speaking in his paramount character as ENS. In this character, at all events, he finally calls "by name" on the student who represented the fourth category—*i.e. Relation;* and with this speech of ENS to *Relation*, the fragment, as we now have it, abruptly ends. "The rest was prose," we are informed—*i.e.* whatever was said by *Relation*, and to or by the six remaining Predicaments, was said in prose and has not been preserved. For some farther elucidations, especially as to the particular fellow-student of Milton at Christ's who represented *Relation*, see our notes on the fragment.

This is a somewhat long introduction to so brief a piece. But the piece is so curious in its kind, and has remained so obscure hitherto, that the introduction seems necessary. Let the reader observe, in conclusion, how it happened that the piece came to be detached from the Latin Prolusio with which it originally stood in context. There can be no doubt that, though the volume containing the *Epistolæ Familiares* and the *Prolusiones Oratoriæ* bears date 1674, the printing of the volume had begun in 1673, when Milton had also at press the second edition of his Minor Poems. Milton, we can see, was engaged with this edition of his poems when the publisher Aylmer, brought to a stop in the other volume by the impossibility of adding, as originally intended, the "Letters of State" to the "Familiar Letters," applied to him through a friend for something else that might fill up the blank. Searching among his papers, to oblige Aylmer, he finds his old College *Prolusiones Oratoriæ;* and these he makes over to Aylmer, with but one exception. The exception is that he clips off from the sixth *Prolusio* its English ending, preferring to insert it, because it is English and mainly in verse, in the edition of his Poems then being brought out by another publisher. Being too late, however,

to insert it in its proper chronological place in the volume, *i.e.* at p. 21, he inserts it at p. 64, remedying the mischance by a direction among the *Errata*. Convenient as this arrangement may have seemed to Milton, the dissociation of the English fragment from the Latin prose essay to which it originally belonged has been the chief cause why the fragment has been such a puzzle to modern readers.

On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This magnificent ode, called by Hallam "perhaps the finest in the English language," was composed, as we learn from Milton's own heading of it in the edition of 1645, in the year 1629. Milton was then twenty-one years of age, in his sixth academic year at Cambridge, and a B.A. of a year's standing. There is an interesting allusion to the ode by Milton himself, when he was in the act of composing it, in the sixth of his Latin elegies. In that elegy, addressed to his friend Charles Diodati, residing in the country, in answer to a metrical epistle which Diodati had sent to him on the 13th of December, 1629, there occurs the following passage :—

"At tu siquid agam scitabere (si modo saltem
Esse putas tanti noscere si quid agam).
Paciferum canimus cælesti semine regem,
Faustaque sacratis secula pacta libris;
Vagitumque Dei, et stabulantem paupere tecto
Qui suprema suo cum patre regna colit;
Stelliparumque polum, modulantesque æthere turmas,
Et subito elisos ad sua fana deos.
Dona quidem dedimus Christi natalibus illa;
Illa sub auroram lux mihi prima tulit.
Te quoque pressa manent patriis meditata cicutis;
Tu mihi cui recitem judicis instar eris."

Here we have a distinct description of the *Ode on the Nativity*, as then finished or nearly so, and ready to be shown to Diodati, together with the express information that it was begun on Christmas-day 1629—information according with that given in the first line of the ode itself :—

"This is the month and this the happy morn."

No farther introduction to the poem is here necessary, unless we may bid the reader note particularly the treatment of the gods of the heathen mythology in the closing stanzas of the "Hymn." It is curious to observe how Milton's imagination was possessed thus early with an idea afterwards so fully developed in his *Paradise Lost*—that of the identity of the gods of the heathen Religions with the devils, or degraded angels, of the Bible, thrust down into Hell after their rebellion, but permitted, after man's Fall, to leave their "infernal jail" and range the upper Earth, in the false guise of gods, till the full coming of Christ.

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and early Draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

Having, in the Ode on the Nativity, celebrated the birth of Christ, Milton seems to have intended this little piece, "Upon the Circumcision," as a sequel. This appears from the opening lines, in which distinct allusion is made to the Nativity. We may therefore, with great probability, suppose the piece to have been written on or about the Feast of the Circumcision following the Christmas of the previous ode—*i. e.* Jan. 1, 1629-30.

THE PASSION.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This piece, also, as the opening stanza implies, grew out of the Ode on the Nativity, and is a kind of sequel to it. It was probably written for Easter 1630. It is but the fragment of an intended larger poem, for which, after he had proceeded so far, he thought his powers unequal.

ON TIME.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and early Draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

In the draft of this little piece, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS., the title is given more at length thus: *On*

Time—To be set on a Clock-case. Whether the piece was actually set on any such piece of furniture we know not; but the direction is worth bearing in mind in reading the piece, and explains in a special manner the wording of the third line. The piece is assigned, conjecturally, to the year 1630.

At a Solemn Music.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and three earlier Drafts, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This piece is also assigned, conjecturally, to the year 1630. The title "At a Solemn Music" may be translated "At a Concert of Sacred Music." Milton, we know, had been a musician from his childhood, and had had unusual opportunities of hearing the best music in England. His father, the scrivener of Bread Street, had had some reputation as a musical composer even before his son's birth, and while Elizabeth was still on the throne; and not a few compositions of his, in the shape both of madrigals and of church music, written then or afterwards, are to be found in the printed music-books of the time. (See Introd. to the Latin Poem *Ad Patrem* among the *Sylvæ.*) Music, vocal and instrumental, must have been one of the recreations to which Milton was accustomed as a boy in his father's house; and, wherever there was a really good concert within his reach in later life, he would hardly fail to be present.

Song on May Morning.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This little piece is also assigned, but only conjecturally, to the year 1630. If this is correct, the exact date is May 1, 1630.

On Shakespeare.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and earlier printed copy prefixed, anonymously, to the second folio edition of Shakespeare in 1632.)

This famous little piece is sometimes spoken of as Milton's "Sonnet on Shakespeare;" but it is not even laxly a Sonnet,

as it consists of sixteen lines. In its anonymous printed form among the commendatory verses prefixed to the Shakespeare Folio of 1632, it is entitled "An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakespeare." That it was written two years before its publication in so distinguished a place appears from the date "1630" appended to its shorter title in the original editions of Milton's Poems. It seems to me not improbable that Milton originally wrote the lines in a copy of the First Folio Shakespeare in his possession, and furnished them thence to the publisher of the Second Folio. They were the first thing of Milton's given to the public in print; and, but for his reclaiming them thirteen years later, they might have been read now in the Second Folio Shakespeare without any knowledge of their being his.

On the University Carrier.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

The two pieces on this subject are chiefly curious as specimens of Milton's muse in that facetious style in which, according to his own statement, he was hardly at home. They celebrate an incident which must have been of considerable interest to all Cambridge men of Milton's time — the death of old Thomas Hobson, the Cambridge University carrier.

Born in 1544, or twenty years before Shakespeare, Hobson had for more than sixty years been one of the most noted characters in Cambridge. Every week during this long period he had gone and come between Cambridge and the Bull Inn, Bishopsgate Street, London, driving his own wain and horses, and carrying letters and parcels, and sometimes stray passengers. All the Heads and Fellows of Colleges, all the students, and all the townspeople, knew him. By his business as a carrier, and also by letting out horses, he had become one of the wealthiest citizens in Cambridge—owner of houses in the town and of other property. He had also such a reputation for shrewdness and humour that, rightly or wrongly, all sorts of good sayings were fathered upon him. Thus, the well-known

saying "Hobson's choice; this or nothing," is referred, on Steele's authority in the *Spectator* (No. 509), to Hobson, the Cambridge carrier. "Being a man of great ability and inven-"tion," says Steele, "and one that saw where there might good "profit arise, though the duller men overlooked it, this ingenious "man was the first in this island who let out hackney-horses. "He lived in Cambridge; and, observing that the scholars rid "hard, his manner was to keep a large stable of horses, with "boots, bridles, and whips, to furnish the gentlemen at once, "without going from college to college to borrow, as they have "done since the death of this worthy man. I say, Mr. Hobson "kept a stable of forty good cattle, always ready and fit for "travelling; but, when a man came for a horse, he was led "into the stable, where there was great choice; but he obliged "him to take the horse which stood next the stable-door; so "that every customer was alike well served according to his "chance, and every horse ridden with the same justice—from "whence it became a proverb, when what ought to be your "election was forced upon you, to say 'Hobson's Choice'!" Sometimes a horse which Hobson thus let out was let for the whole journey to London and back; and on such occasions, when Hobson, standing at the stable-door, saw a college-man go off at a rate which he thought too fast for the horse, he is said to have had one phrase in his mouth. "*You will get to London time enough*," he used to say, "*if you don't ride too fast*"—a saying which looks like another version of that which Bacon, in his Essay "On Despatch," quotes from a wise man of his acquaintance. "I knew a wise man," says Bacon, "that had it for a by-word, "when he saw men hasten to a conclusion, '*Stay a little, that* "*we may make an end the sooner*.'"

With all his wit, wealth, and prudence, Hobson could not last for ever. Till his eighty-sixth year the hale old man had persisted in driving his carrier's waggon himself. But, in April or May 1630, a stop had been put to his journeys. The Plague, after an interval of five years, was again in England; it was rife in Cambridge this time, so that the colleges had been prematurely closed and all University exercises brought to an end; and one of the precautions taken was to interdict

the continued passage of Hobson, with his letters and parcels, between Cambridge and London. Though many of his neighbours among the townspeople died of the Plague, the tough old carrier escaped that distemper. But the compulsory idleness of some months was too much for him. Some time in November or December 1630, just as the colleges had reassembled, and, the Plague having abated, he might have resumed his journeys, he sickened and took to his bed. On the 1st of January, 1630-31, he died, aged eighty-six. Before he died he had executed a will, in which he left a large family of sons, daughters and grandchildren (one of his daughters being the wife of a Warwickshire baronet), well provided for. Nor had he forgotten the town in which he had made his fortunes. Besides other legacies for public purposes to the town of Cambridge, he left money for the perpetual maintenance of the town-conduit; and to this day the visitor to Cambridge sees a handsome conduit, called after Hobson's name, in the centre of the town, and runnels of clear water flowing, by Hobson's munificence, along the sides of the footways in the main streets. In some respects, Hobson is still the *genius loci* of Cambridge. In London also Hobson was long remembered. At the Bull Inn, in Bishopsgate Street, where he used to put up, there was to be seen, in Steele's time, and long afterwards, a fresco figure of the old Cambridge carrier, with a money-bag under his arm. There are engravings of this figure.

Little wonder that the death of such a worthy as old Hobson made a stir among the Cambridge dons and undergraduates, and that many copies of verses were written on the occasion. Several such copies of verses have been recovered; but none so remarkable as Milton's. Milton seems to have had a fondness for the old man, whose horses he must have often hired, and by whom he must often have sent and received parcels. The title of Milton's two pieces is exact to the circumstances of the case. "*On the University Carrier, who sickened in the time of his vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the Plague.*" The gist of the poems themselves, too—in which, through all their punning facetiousness, there is a vein of kindliness—is that Hobson died of *ennui.* Both pieces must have been written in or about

January 1630-31. The second of them, according to Todd, appeared in a small book published in London in 1640 under the title of *A Banquet of Jests*, the first words being altered from "Here lieth one" to "Here Hobson lies," so as to make the piece intelligible without its companion.

An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.[1])

The date of the composition of this poem is determined by that of the event to which it refers—the death, in child-birth, of Jane, wife of John Paulet, fifth Marquis of Winchester. This lady, who was but twenty-three years of age when she died, and was much spoken of for her beauty and mental accomplishments, was a daughter of Thomas, Viscount Savage, of Rock-Savage, Cheshire, by his wife, Elizabeth, the eldest daughter and co-heir of Thomas Darcy, Earl of Rivers. Her husband, the Marquis of Winchester, who had succeeded to the title in 1628, was a Roman Catholic; he subsequently attained great distinction by his loyalty during the civil wars; and he did not die till 1674, forty-three years after he had been made a widower by the death of this, his accomplished (first) wife. That event occurred on the 15th of April, 1631, in circumstances thus communicated in a contemporary news-letter,[2] dated the 21st of the same month:—"The Lady Marquis of Winchester, daughter "to the Lord Viscount Savage, had an imposthume upon her cheek "lanced; the humour fell down into her throat, and quickly "despatched her, being big with child: whose death is lamented,

[1] I have seen a draft, apparently of earlier date, in a MS. volume of poems, transcribed for private use, by some lover of poetry in the first half of the sixteenth century. The volume is among the Ayscough MSS. in the British Museum, and is numbered 1446 in that collection; and this particular poem occurs at pp. 72—74, and has this superscription, "*On the Marchionesse of Winchester, whoe died in childbedd, April* 15, 1631," and this subscription, "*Jo. Milton, of Chr. Coll. Cambr.*"

[2] Letter, of date "London, April 21, 1631," from John Pory to Sir Thomas Puckering, Bart., of Priory, Warwickshire; quoted in the *Court and Times of Charles I.*, vol. ii. p. 106.

"as well in respect of other her virtues as that she was inclining "to become a Protestant." An unusual amount of public regret seems to have been caused by the lady's melancholy death. It was the subject of a long elegy by the poet-laureate, Ben Jonson, printed in his "Underwoods;" and there were verses on the occasion by Davenant and other poets.[1] How Milton, then in his twenty-third year, and still at Cambridge, came to be so interested in the event as to make it the subject of a poem, is not known. Warton had been told that there was a Cambridge collection of verses on the occasion, among which Milton's elegiac ode first appeared; and some expressions in the ode might imply that fact; but no such volume has been found. Whether Milton alone at Cambridge wrote on the subject, or whether he wrote in conjunction with others, the poem which he did write will not suffer in comparison with even that of the veteran poet-laureate on the same occasion. Here is a portion of Ben Jonson's corresponding elegy:—

"What gentle ghost, besprent with April dew,
Hails me so solemnly to yonder yew,
And, beckoning, woos me from the fatal tree
To pluck a garland for herself or me?
I do obey you, beauty! for in death
You seem a fair one. O that you had breath
To give your shade a name! Stay, stay! I feel
A horror in me; all my blood is steel;
Stiff, stark, my joints 'gainst one another knock!
Whose daughter? Ha! great Savage of the Rock!
He's good as great. I am almost a stone;
And, ere I can ask more of her, she's gone!
Alas! I am all marble! write the rest
Thou would'st have written, Fame, upon my breast:
It is a large fair table, and a true;
And the disposure will be something new,
When I, who would the poet have become,
At least may bear the inscription to her tomb.

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[1] Care must be taken not to confound this Marchioness with another Marchioness of Winchester, who would have been *this one's mother-in-law* had she lived, but who died as early as 1614. Verses on *her* death have been quoted as verses on the death of Milton's Marchioness.

She was the Lady Jane, and Marchioniss
Of Winchester (the heralds can tell this),
Earl Rivers' grandchild! Serve not forms, good Fame;
Sound thou her virtues, give her soul a name.
Had I a thousand mouths, as many tongues,
And voice to raise them from my brazen lungs,
I durst not aim at that. . . . .
* * * * *
Her sweetness, softness, her fair courtesy,
Her wary guards, her wise simplicity,
Were like a ring of Virtues 'bout her set,
And Piety the centre where all met.
A reverend state she had, an awful eye,
A dazzling, yet inviting, majesty:
What Nature, Fortune, Institution, Fact
Could sum to a perfection, was her act.
How did she leave the world! with what contempt!
Just as she in it lived, and so exempt
From all affection! When they urged the cure
Of her disease, how did her soul assure
Her sufferings, as the body had been away,
And to the torturers, her doctors, say:—
'Stick on your cupping-glasses; fear not; put
Your hottest caustics to; burn, lance, or cut:
'Tis but a body which you can torment,
And I into the world all soul was sent!'"

It will not be difficult to decide whether Ben Jonson's rough leathery strength here, or the simple and sweet delicacy of Milton's lines, was the more appropriate to the occasion. But how did it appear to the family? The widowed young Marquis was pretty sure to see Ben Jonson's lines. Did he ever see Milton's? When Milton first printed them in his volume of 1645, the Marquis was again married, and all England was ringing with the fame of his obstinate Catholicism, and his resolute loyalty to Charles, crushed at length by the storming and sacking of his magnificent house of Basing in Hampshire by Cromwell's army (Oct. 1645). From that date he lived on, magnificently Royalist and Catholic as ever; and, in 1673, when the Elegy on his young first Marchioness was reprinted in the second edition of Milton's Poems, he was still alive, with a third Marchioness beside him, children by the second around him, and the image of the young first dim in the distance of years.

L'Allegro and Il Penseroso.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

These were written as companion-pieces, and are to be read together. There is some doubt as to the time of their composition, there being no drafts of them among the Cambridge MSS. In the edition of 1645 they follow immediately after the pieces on Hobson, and precede the *Arcades*, with the intervention, however, of the ten Sonnets printed in that edition. With great probability they are assigned to the period immediately subsequent to Milton's student-life at Cambridge, *i.e.* to the time of his studious seclusion in his father's country-house at Horton in Buckinghamshire, near Windsor. Milton retired thither in 1632, after taking his degree of M.A., and he mainly resided there till the beginning of 1638. If the pieces were written at Horton, they were probably written soon after his going there. That they were written in some peaceful country neighbourhood, amid the sights and sounds of quiet English landscape and English rural life, is rendered likely by their nature. A claim has been put in for Forest Hill near Oxford as the place of their composition; and the scenery in that neighbourhood is insisted on, as according with the scenery of the poems and furnishing hints for it. But, though Milton's family connexions with Oxford were of old date, and he had probably visited that neighbourhood several times, it was not till 1643 that his marriage with Mary Powell brought him on that special visit to the neighbourhood on the tradition of which commentators, neglecting dates, have built the supposition that *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* were written at Forest Hill. On the whole, the scenery of Horton accords quite as well with the scenery of the poems as any scenery round Oxford. "In the "morning scene in the *Allegro*," as I have elsewhere remarked, "nearly all the details of the landscape are such as Horton "would furnish to this day; and, though other localities in "Southern England would furnish most of them quite as well, "one or two might be claimed by Horton as not so common. "The 'towers and battlements'

"Bosomed high in tufted trees"

"are almost evidently Windsor Castle; and a characteristic sound "of Horton to this day is that of 'the hounds and horn' from "Windsor Park when the royal huntsmen are out." The fact is, however, that, though the landscape of Horton may in a general way be conceived as the landscape of *L'Allegro*, and the same landscape by moonlight may pass in a general way for the landscape of *Il Penseroso*, there are features in the landscape of both poems which neither Horton nor any other one actual neighbourhood that may compete for the honour of the poems can possibly have yielded. Where, in the flat vicinity of Horton, or round Oxford, shall we find the

"Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest"

of the *Allegro?* Or, if these mountains were found, what place, furnishing them, would furnish at the same time the Gothic cathedral required in the *Penseroso*—

"The high-embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light"?

In short, it is a mistaken notion of the poems, and a somewhat crude notion, to suppose that they must contain a transcript of the scenery of any one place, even the place where they were written. That place (and we incline to think it was Horton) may have shed its influence into the poems; but the purpose of the poet was not to describe actual scenery, but to represent two *moods*, and to do so by making each mood move, as it were, amid circumstances and adjuncts akin to it and nutritive of it. Hence the scenery is visionary scenery, made up of eclectic recollections from various spots blended into one ideal landscape. It is, indeed, the exquisite fitness with which circumstances are chosen or invented—or, let us rather say, passively occurred to the poet—in true poetic affinity with the two moods, that makes the poems so beautiful, and secures them, while the English language lasts, against the possibility of being forgotten.

The poems, we have said, are companion-pieces, and must be read together. Each describes an ideal day—a day of twelve hours. But *L'Allegro* is the ideal day of the mind

of an educated youth, like Milton himself, in a mood of light cheerfulness. And observe at what point that day begins. It begins at dawn. The first sound heard is the song of the lark; the first sights seen round the rustic cottage, or in the walk from it, are those of new-waked nature, and of labour fresh afield. Then the light broadens on to mid-day, and we have the reapers at their dinner or the haymakers busy in the sun. And so, through the afternoon merry-makings, we are led to the evening sports and junkets and nut-brown ale round the cottage bench; after which, when the country-folks, old and young, have retired to rest, the imaginary youth of the poem, still in his mood of cheerfulness, may protract his more educated day by fit reading indoors, varied by sweet Lydian music. Contrast with all this the day of *Il Penseroso*. It is the same youth, but in a mood more serious, thoughtful, and melancholy. The season of the year, too, may be later. At all events, the ideal day now begins with the evening. It is the song of the nightingale that is first heard; lured by which the youth walks forth in moonlight, seeing all objects in their silver aspect, and listening to the sounds of nightfall. Such evening or nocturnal sights and sounds it is that befit the mood of melancholy. And then, indoors again we follow the thoughtful youth, to see him, in his chamber, where the embers glow on the hearth, sitting meditatively, disturbed by no sound, save (for it may be a town that he is now in) the drowsy voice of the passing bellman. Later still, or after midnight, we may fancy him in some high watch-tower, communing, over his books, with old philosophers, or with poets of grave and tragic themes. In such solemn and weirdly phantasies let the whole night pass, and let the morning come, not gay, but sombre and cloudy, the winds rocking the trees, and the rain-drops falling heavily from the eaves. At last, when the sun is up, the watcher, who has not slept, may sally forth; but it is to lose himself in some forest of monumental oaks or pines, where sleep may overtake him recumbent by some waterfall. And always, ere he rejoins the mixed society of men, let him pay his due visit of worship to the Gothic cathedral near, and have his mind raised to its highest by the music of the pealing organ.

The studied antithesis of the two pieces has to be kept in mind

in reading them. It needs only be added that Warton, Todd, and other commentators suppose that Milton may have been aided in his conception of the two poems, and in the composition of *Il Penseroso*, by some passages in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and, in particular, by a poem prefixed to that work, and entitled "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy, or a Dialogue between Pleasure and Pain." Here are four stanzas of the poem :—

"When I go musing all alone,
Thinking of divers things foreknown,
When I build castles in the air,
Void of sorrow, void of fear,
Pleasing myself with phantasms sweet,
Methinks the time runs very fleet.
All my joys to this are folly;
Nought so sweet as Melancholy.

* * * *

When to myself I act and smile,
With pleasing thoughts the time beguile,
By a brook side or wood so green,
Unheard, unsought for, and unseen,
A thousand pleasures do me bless
And crown my soul with happiness.
All my joys besides are folly,
Nought so sweet as Melancholy.

* * * *

Methinks I hear, methinks I see,
Sweet music, wondrous melody,
Towns, palaces, and cities fine;
Here now, then there, the world is mine;
Rare beauties, gallant ladies, shine,
Whate'er is lovely or divine
All other joys to this are folly;
Nought so sweet as Melancholy.

Methinks I hear, methinks I see,
Ghosts, goblins, fiends: my phantasy
Presents a thousand ugly shapes,
Headless bears, black men, and apes;
Doleful outcries, fearful sights,
My sad and dismal soul affrights.
All my griefs to this are jolly,
None so damned as Melancholy."

Milton had, doubtless, read these stanzas, but the reader will

Judge for himself how far he may, in the present case, have been indebted to them. Very little indeed, I should say! The same may be said of his supposed obligation to the following song in Beaumont and Fletcher's drama of *Nice Valor;* which is itself, it will be noted, a kind of echo of Burton's stanzas:—

"Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!
There's nought in this life sweet,
If wise men were to see 't,
But only melancholy.
O sweetest melancholy!
Welcome, folded arms, and fixèd eyes;
A sigh that, piercing, mortifies;
A look that's fastened to the ground;
A tongue chained up without a sound;
Fountain-heads, and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves;
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls.
A midnight bell, a parting groan,
These are the sounds we feed upon:
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley;
Nothing's so dainty-sweet as lovely melancholy."

It is quite possible that Milton may have had in his recollection other poems, by Withers or the like, in the same pensive strain, and in the simple measure which he had chosen for his two companion pieces. At all events, he had in recollection the pretty little poem by Marlowe, called *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love,* and beginning

"Come live with me and be my love,"

and Sir Walter Raleigh's answer to the same, called *The Nymph's Reply.* Those two little pieces had been popular favourites in England for forty years, and had been often imitated; and both *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* end with a refrain caught from them. Thus Marlowe's piece ends

"If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love."

And *L'Allegro* ends

"These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live."

Arcades.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and earlier draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

"*Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess-Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some noble persons of her Family*," are the words added by Milton himself to the title of the poem, to explain its nature. In other words, it is part, and only part, of a masque presented before a venerable lady at her country-seat by some members of her family who had chosen this way of showing their affection and respect for her. The rest of the masque has perished; only this fragment of it, supplied by Milton, remains.

About the date of the piece there is room for doubt. From its intimate connexion with *Comus*, it has always, very properly, been associated with that poem; and the association has been extended to the particular of time. The date of *Comus* being certainly known to have been 1634, and the *Arcades* being, as we shall see, an earlier and slighter thing done to oblige the same noble family for whom *Comus* was written, it has been assumed that the interval between the two pieces was short, and that the *Arcades* was written either somewhat earlier in 1634 than *Comus*, or in the immediately preceding year, 1633. The assumption was natural enough, and I have myself favoured it in previous writings about Milton and his Poems. I have found reason, however, for thinking that the assumption is not quite correct, and that the *Arcades* preceded *Comus* by more than a year. The reason is founded on the place occupied by the draft of the *Arcades* in the Cambridge Volume of Milton's MSS. It is actually the first piece there, occupying pp. 1–3 of the volume, and followed on pp. 4–5 by the three drafts of the Song *At a Solemn Music*, and on pp. 6–7 by the two drafts of the *Prose Letter to a Friend* containing the "Sonnet on his having arrived at the age of Twenty-three." Nor will it do here to suppose that the order of the pieces has been disturbed in the mere binding of the volume, and that the *Arcades* may, after all, have been of later composition than the Song and Letter which follow it. For the Song, it will be noted, begins on the

back of the last page of the *Arcades*, and the Letter again on the *back* of the last page of the Song; and, if the reader will take seven pages of writing paper and imagine that arrangement of the matter written on them, he will see what conclusion it necessitates. It is fair that that conclusion should be given in the words of the late Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby, who first called attention to the arrangement as conflicting with the general hypothesis as to the date of the *Arcades*. "We can hardly suppose," he says (*Ramblings*, p. 52), "that Milton, in a volume designed as the first repository of his compositions, should have turned back and commenced his *Arcades* on page 1, and, adopting the design of the Procrustean bed, should have taken care to curtail or enlarge it, so as, with the ode on pages 4 and 5, exactly to occupy the five pages left blank,"—left blank, Mr. Sotheby means, before the Drafts of the Prose Letter, with the contained Sonnet; which Drafts must have been written shortly after Milton's twenty-third birthday, Dec. 9, 1631. In other words, it is an inference hardly to be escaped from, that the *Arcades* must have been written before the Prose Letter, and consequently not later than the year 1631. This would drive it back, out of what we have called "the Horton period" of Milton's life, into the end of "the Cambridge period," and would make it a composition, not of Milton's twenty-sixth year, but, at latest, of his twenty-third. But, though this has to be borne in mind, the intimate connexion between the *Arcades* and the *Comus* remains a fact of so much importance as to justify, if it does not require, the printing of the two consecutively. Milton did not print them *quite* consecutively in his edition of 1645, where *Comus* was made to stand the last of the English Poems and in a manner separate from the rest; but he brought the *Arcades* near to *Comus*, with only *Lycidas* between. In the present edition *Arcades* will immediately precede, and will prepare for, *Comus;* and, indeed, the present introduction to the shorter poem must serve also as a part of the introduction to the larger.

The lady before whom the masque was presented of which *Arcades* forms part was Alice, Countess-Dowager of Derby, who, in 1631, was about seventy years of age. The life of this lady had been one that would have made her venerabl

in the social and literary history of England, even had there not been this association of her later years with the youth of Milton. Born, about the year 1560, one of the daughters of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe, Northamptonshire—from whom are descended the Earls Spencer and their branches—she had been married in early life to Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, eldest son of the fourth Earl of Derby. One of her sisters, Elizabeth Spencer, was then, by marriage, Lady Carey, and another, Anne Spencer, was Lady Compton. The three sisters seem to have at that time been especially well known to the poet Spenser, who, indeed, claimed to be related to the Spencers of Althorpe. Spenser's earliest known publication, *Muiopotmos* (1590), was dedicated to Lady Carey; his *Mother Hubberd's Tale* (1591) was dedicated to Lady Compton; and to the youngest of the three sisters—the one with whom we are at present concerned—was dedicated in the same year (1591) his *Tears of the Muses*, a poem of peculiar interest now, on account of its allusions to the state of English poetry when it was written, and to English poets then alive. In paying this honour to Alice, Lady Strange, Spenser had regard not only to her own accomplishments and his connexion with her family, but also to the reputation of her husband, Lord Strange. No nobleman of the day was of greater note in the world of letters than Lord Strange. He was himself a poet; among the dramatic companies of the time was one retained by him and known as "Lord Strange's Players;" and among his clients and panegyrists were Nash, Greene, and others of Shakespeare's seniors in the English drama. All this is recognised in Spenser's dedication of the *Tears of the Muses* to Lady Strange. "Most "brave and noble Lady," he says, "the things that make ye so "much honoured of the world as ye be are such as, without my "simple lines' testimony, are throughly known to all men: "namely, your excellent beauty, your virtuous behaviour, and your "noble match with that most honourable Lord, the very pattern "of right nobility. But the causes for which ye have thus de-"served of me to be honoured (if honour it be at all) are both "your particular bounties and also some private bonds of affi-"nity which it hath pleased your Ladyship to acknowledge. . . . "Vouchsafe, noble Lady, to accept this simple remembrance,

"though not worthy of yourself, yet such as perhaps, by good "acceptance thereof, you may hereafter cull out a more meet and "memorable evidence of your own excellent deserts." Some time after this dedication—to wit, in September 1593—the lady so addressed rose still higher in the peerage by the accession of her husband to the earldom of Derby on his father's death. Ferdinando, fifth Earl of Derby, however, enjoyed his new dignity but a few months. He died on the 16th of April, 1594, in his thirty-sixth year, much regretted. From that day his widow was known as Alice, Countess-Dowager of Derby. The earldom of Derby went to the next male heir; and the Countess-Dowager, with her three young daughters by her deceased husband—Lady Anne Stanley, Lady Frances Stanley, and Lady Elizabeth Stanley—lived on to form new alliances. Spenser, who had honoured her during her husband's life, continued to honour her in her widowhood. In his pastoral of *Colin Clout's come Home again* (completed in 1595), the poet, having enumerated the chief "shepherds" or poets of the British isle, and having proceeded thence to a mention of some of the chief "shepherdesses" or "nymphs," introduces three of these ladies thus:

"Ne less praiseworthie are the sisters three,
The honour of the noble familie
Of which I meanest boast myself to be,
And most that unto them I am so nie,
Phyllis, Charillis, and sweet Amaryllis.
Phyllis the fair is eldest of the three;
The next to her is beautiful Charillis;
But the youngest is the highest in degree."

These three ladies are evidently the three married daughters of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe, honoured some years before by dedications of Spenser's earliest poems to them respectively; and there is next to no doubt that Amaryllis, the youngest of them, and "the highest in degree," is the one to whom he had dedicated his *Tears of the Muses*—then Lady Strange, but now Countess-Dowager of Derby. Indeed, there are special allusions in *Colin Clout's come Home again* to the widowed condition of this lady. Among the "shepherds" of the British isle mentioned in the poem is one "Amyntas," spoken of as, while he lived, a poet and a patron of poets, but as now unfortunately dead; and we chance

to know that "Amyntas" was the pastoral name by which other writers of the day besides Spenser—such as Nash—used to designate Lord Strange. Hence, when Spenser says,

"Amyntas quite has gone and lies full low,
Having his Amaryllis left to mone,"

the identification of Amaryllis with the Countess-Dowager of Derby is complete. We can thus better understand the following lines, in which Spenser, having praised the two elder sisters, Phyllis and Charillis, goes on to praise the widowed Amaryllis:—

"But Amaryllis whether fortunate
Or else unfortunate may I aread,
That freëd is from Cupid's yoke by fate,
Since which she doth new bands' adventure dread?
Shepherd, whatever thou hast heard to be
In this or that praised diversely apart,
In her thou mayst them all assembled see,
And sealed up in the treasure of her heart."

In other words, Amaryllis, the youngest of the three sisters and "the highest in degree," was the favourite of Spenser, and it was a speculation with him whether she would ever marry again. He seems to think it unlikely. Since the death of Amyntas she seemed to be dreading the "adventure of new bands."

The lady, however, did marry again. In 1600, when Spenser was no longer alive to approve or to regret, she contracted a second marriage with Lord Keeper Egerton—then only Sir Thomas Egerton and Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Elizabeth, but afterwards (1603) Baron Ellesmere and Lord Chancellor to King James, and finally (1616) Viscount Brackley. This eminent lawyer and statesman had already been twice married, and was a man of about sixty years of age, with grown-up children, when he made his splendid match with the Countess-Dowager of Derby. They were not then strangers to each other, for he had been connected with the Derby family as their legal adviser, while Lord Strange was alive. The match, though not one of juvenile affection, and though we hear of certain family differences which it involved, had advantages on both sides. On the one hand it brought an increase of fortune and influence to the grave Lord Keeper; and, on the other hand, the Countess-

Dowager of Derby—who, of course, retained that title in her new condition as the Lord Keeper's wife—was brought once again conspicuously into society by her husband's connexion with public affairs. In 1601 she and her husband jointly purchased the estate of Harefield in Middlesex—a charming property, with a fine mansion upon it, on a spot of well-wooded hill and meadow, on the river Colne, about four miles from Uxbridge. Here, or in London, the Lord Keeper and his wife mainly resided, doing the honours of their position, and receiving in return the recognitions due to persons of their rank. One very memorable incident in their life at Harefield was a visit of four days paid them there by Queen Elizabeth (July 31—August 3, 1602), when all sorts of pageants were held for her Majesty's recreation, including the first known performance of Shakespeare's *Othello* by "Burbidge's players"—Shakespeare himself probably present and taking part. A long "avenue of elms" leading to the house was the scene of a kind of masque of welcome at the Queen's reception, and of another of leave-taking on her departure, and was ever afterwards known as "the Queen's Walk." Throughout the reign of James I. there were similar recognitions of the high social rank of the Chancellor and his noble wife, besides not a few of a literary character, in the shape of poems, or dedications of poems, to them. It was not only their own marriage, however—a marriage that proved childless—that now connected the pair. Not long after that marriage had taken place, the ties of family between the two had been drawn closer by the marriage of the Lord Keeper's son—then Sir John Egerton—with Lady Frances Stanley, the Countess's second daughter by her former husband the Earl of Derby. Thus, while the Countess-Dowager was the wife of the father, one of her daughters was the wife of the son. Her other two daughters made marriages of even higher promise at the time. The eldest, Lady Anne Stanley, had married Grey Bridges, fifth Lord Chandos; and the youngest, Lady Elizabeth Stanley, had married, at a very early age (1603), Henry, Lord Hastings, who, in 1605, succeeded his grandfather as Earl of Huntingdon, and possessor of the fine estate of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire.

This last-named marriage seems to have given peculiar satisfaction to all concerned, and not least to the Countess-Dowager.

Accounts remain of a splendid reception given to her on her first visit to Lord and Lady Huntingdon's seat at Ashby-de-la-Zouch in August 1607. The poet Marston had been employed to prepare a masque for the occasion—the MS. of which is still preserved and bears this title: "The Lorde and Ladye of Huntingdon's Entertainement of their right noble Mother, Alice, Countesse-Dowager of Darby, the firste nighte of her Honour's arrivall at the House of Ashby."[1] There were trumpet-bursts of welcome "when her ladyship approached the park-corner;" then, within the park, where "an antique gate" had been erected, "an old enchantress attired in crimson velvet, with pale face and dark hair," seemed to forbid her entrance, but was checked by Saturn, who, recognising the visitor, exclaims

"Peace, stay! it is, it is, it is even she,"

and then addresses her in a cordial speech. There was more allegory and speech-making "on the stairs leading to the great chamber;" and then, within the great chamber, the main masque itself, "presented by four knights and four gentlemen," with Cynthia descending in a cloud "in a habit of blue satin, finely embroidered with stag and clouds," Ariadne rising to meet her, &c. Introduced into the masque was a complimentary poem to the Countess in thirteen stanzas, spoken by thirteen ladies in succession; among whom were Lady Huntingdon, her sister Mrs. Egerton, Lady Hunsdon (*i.e.* the Countess's sister, formerly Lady Carey and Spenser's *Phyllis*), Lady Compton (the Countess's other sister, Spenser's *Charillis*), and Lady Berkeley (Lady Hunsdon's daughter).

The masque is a poor affair to read now; but Marston appears to have done his best upon it, and there is a dedication of the MS., in his own hand, to the Countess-Dowager of Derby. She was in the habit of receiving such compliments. In 1609, Davies of Hereford dedicated his *Holy Roode, or Christ's Cross*, "to the Right Honourable well-accomplished Lady Alice, Countess of Derby, my good lady and mistress, and to her three right noble daughters by birth, nature, and education, the Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Huntingdon, the Lady Frances Egerton, and the

[1] The masque is now included in Mr. Halliwell's edition of Marston's works, 1856. The MS. is in the Bridgewater Library.

Lady Anne, wife to the truly noble Lord Grey Chandois that now is." Other such instances of the Countess's connexion with the literature of the reign of James I. might be cited. In Feb. 1609-10, for example, she and her daughter, Lady Huntingdon, assisted in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens*, performed at James's Court by the Queen and her ladies. But "the peerage-book of this Countess," says Warton truly, "is the poetry of her times."

On the 15th of March, 1616-17, the Lord-Chancellor Ellesmere, then just created Viscount Brackley, died, and the Countess-Dowager of Derby commenced her second widowhood. She was then probably over five-and-fifty years of age, and she survived for twenty years more. These twenty years she spent chiefly in retirement at Harefield, where she endowed almshouses for poor widows, and did other acts of charity, but was surrounded all the while, or occasionally visited, by those numerous descendants and other relatives who had grown up, or were growing up, to venerate her, and whose joys and sorrows constituted the chief interest of her declining years. By the year 1630, when she was about seventy years of age, she had at least twenty of her own direct descendants alive, besides collateral relatives in the families of her sisters, *Phyllis* and *Charillis.* (1.) One group of the venerable lady's direct descendants consisted of her eldest daughter, Lady Chandos, and that daughter's four surviving children by her first husband, Lord Chandos. Her first husband, we say; for that daughter, having been left a widow by the death of Lord Chandos in early manhood in 1621, had married, three years afterwards, for her second husband, Mervyn Tuchet, Lord Audley, Earl of Castlehaven in the Irish peerage, then a widower with six children—a union of unexampled wretchedness, which closed in circumstances of infamy in 1631, when the Earl was tried and executed on charges hardly paralleled in the criminal annals of England. There are letters in the aged Countess-Dowager of Derby's hand, still extant in the State Paper Office, which prove how sorely her heart was wrung by the disgrace of this affair, which did not leave even her daughter unstained in the eyes of the world. From these letters we learn that she consented, in the course of 1631, though not without reluctance, to receive that

daughter, twice widowed now, but still calling herself Lady Chandos, into the shelter of her house at Harefield; where already were domiciled three of that daughter's children by her first husband—viz.: George Bridges, now Lord Chandos, a boy of about twelve years of age, and a younger brother and sister. The estate of Harefield itself, we also learn, was to descend, after the Countess-Dowager's death, to Lady Chandos, otherwise left "destitute," and so to her son, young Lord Chandos. (2.) An additional group of relatives, also sharing the affections of the venerable Lady of Harefield, but needing her help less than the children of her secluded and unfortunate eldest daughter, consisted of the children of her youngest daughter—that Countess of Huntingdon who, with her husband, had received her so splendidly, three-and-twenty years before, on her first visit to their seat at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The Countess, who seems to have inherited much of her mother's talent and goodness, and to whom Donne had addressed poems, had now four grown-up sons and daughters—Ferdinando, Lord Hastings, twenty-two years of age, and heir-apparent to the earldom of Huntingdon; his younger brother Henry, afterwards Lord Loughborough; a daughter, Alice, married to Sir Gervase Clifton; and another daughter, Elizabeth. These four grandchildren would sometimes be on visits to their grandmother at Harefield from their own homes in London, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and elsewhere. (3.) There was still a third group of relatives around the venerable lady. At or near the time when she herself had married the Lord Keeper Egerton, as we have seen, her second daughter by her former husband, Lady Frances Stanley, had married the Lord Keeper's son, Sir John Egerton. When his father was raised to the peerage as Baron Ellesmere (1603), this Sir John Egerton had become "baron-expectant,"—a designation which rose to the higher one of "Lord Egerton" when his father was made Viscount Brackley (1616). On his father's death, a few months afterwards (March 1616-17), he succeeded him as Viscount. But his dignities did not stop at that point. In May 1617 an earldom which had been intended for the father, in recognition of his long services as Lord Chancellor, was bestowed on the son, and he became Earl of Bridgewater. Thus, the Countess-Dowager of

Derby saw her second daughter, as well as her youngest, take rank as a Countess. A far larger family of children had been born to this daughter than to either of her sisters. Out of fifteen children, born in all, at least ten were alive in 1630, in order of age as follows: the Lady Frances Egerton, married to Sir John Hobart, of Blickling, Norfolk; the Lady Arabella, married to Lord St. John of Bletso, son and heir of the Earl of Bolingbroke; the Ladies Elizabeth, Mary, Penelope, Catharine, Magdalen, and Alice, yet unmarried—the last, Lady Alice, being in her tenth or eleventh year; John, Viscount Brackley, the son and heir, in his ninth year; and his brother, Mr. Thomas Egerton, about a year younger. The head-quarters of this numerous family, or of such of them as were unmarried, were—in London, the Earl of Bridgewater's town-house in the Barbican, Aldersgate Street; in the country, the Earl's mansion of Ashridge, Hertfordshire, about sixteen miles from Harefield. Visits of the Bridgewater family to their aged relative at Harefield might be frequent either from London or from Ashridge.

We are now prepared to understand the exact circumstances of the *Arcades.* Sometime in 1630 or 1631, we are to suppose, some of the younger members of the different groups of the relatives of the Dowager-Countess of Derby determined to get up an entertainment in her honour, at her house at Harefield. The occasion may have been the aged lady's birthday, or it may have been some incidental gathering at Harefield for a family purpose. Whatever it was, the young people had resolved to amuse themselves by some kind of festivity in compliment to the venerable lady of whom they were all so proud. What should the form of the thing be? What could it be but a masque? Harefield, with its avenue of elms called "the Queen's Walk" in memory of Queen Elizabeth's visit, and with its fine park of grassy slopes and well-wooded knolls, was exactly the place for a masque; besides which, was not the Countess accustomed to this kind of entertainment? Would it not be in good taste to remind her of the masques and similar poetical and musical entertainments that had pleased her in her youth, when she had been the theme of Spenser's muse, and had sat by the side of her first husband, Lord

Strange, beholding plays brought out under his patronage? Would it not be pleasant to remind her, also, of such incidents of her subsequent life as the royal visit to her and the Lord Keeper at Harefield in 1602, when the mansion and the grounds were for four days a scene of dramatic pageantry, and her own motherly visit to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, five years later, when that masque of Marston's, the MS. of which was still kept in the family, was performed in her honour? Masques, indeed, were even more in fashion now, in the reign of Charles I., than they had been in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and a masque in a noble family on any occasion of family-rejoicing was the most natural thing in the world.

There was, then, to be a masque, or at least a bit of a masque, at Harefield; and the actors were already provided. But for a good masque, or even a good bit of a masque, more is required than willing actors. Who was to write the words for the little masque, and who was to set the songs in it to music?

The latter question may be answered first. There can be little doubt, I think, that the person to whom the young people of the family of the Countess-Dowager of Derby trusted for all the musical requisites of the masque, if not the person who suggested it originally and entirely superintended it, was Henry Lawes, gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and one of his Majesty's private musicians. Farther particulars respecting this interesting man, one of the most celebrated musical composers of his day, will be given in the Introduction to that one of Milton's Sonnets which is addressed to him (Sonnet XIII.). What we have to attend to here is that, though Lawes was well-known and very popular through English society on account of his musical eminence, and had professional connexions as a composer and teacher of music with not a few aristocratic families, there is proof that by far the most lasting and intimate of his connexions of this latter kind was with the Bridgewater branch of the Countess-Dowager of Derby's family. As late as 1653, when Lawes published the first part of perhaps his chief musical work, called *Ayres and Dialogues for one, two, and three voices*, he dedicated the volume "to the Right Honourable the two most excellent sisters, Alice, Countess of Carbery, and Mary, Lady Herbert of Cherbury and Castle-

island, daughters to the Right Honourable John, Earl of Bridgewater." The dedication runs thus: "No sooner had I thought "of making these public than of inscribing them to your Ladyships, "most of them being composed when I was employed by your "ever-honoured parents to attend your Ladyships' education in "music; who (as in other accomplishments fit for persons of your "quality) excelled most ladies, especially in vocal music, wherein "you were so absolute that you gave life and honour to all I set "and taught you, and that with more understanding than a new "generation, pretending to skill, (I dare say) are capable of." Now the two ladies thus addressed are no other than two of those enumerated above as constituting the third group of the Countess-Dowager of Derby's relatives and descendants, surrounding her, or occasionally visiting her, at Harefield, about 1630-31. They were (Mary) the fourth and (Alice) the eighth of her grand-daughters of the Bridgewater branch, young and unmarried in 1630-31, but, when Lawes wrote the dedication, married and matronly. The dedication certifies that Lawes was a teacher of music in the Bridgewater family when these two ladies were unmarried girls. How far back does that carry the connexion of Lawes with the Bridgewater family? Not to mention documentary evidence showing that in 1642 the relationship of the musician to the family was already peculiarly intimate and of old standing, we have positive proof in *Comus* that it was fully established in 1634. The songs in that masque were set to music by Lawes; he was one of the actors in it, and the manager of the affair generally; and, besides the above-mentioned Lady Alice Egerton, he had for his fellow-performers in the masque two other pupils of his in the Bridgewater family: viz., her brothers and juniors, young Lord Brackley and young Mr. Thomas Egerton. (For farther particulars, see Introduction to *Comus*.) As early as 1634, therefore, Lawes was on the friendliest professional footing with the Bridgewater family, much in their society, and superintending not only their musical studies, but their more tasteful relaxations. All that is farther necessary for our present purpose is the supposition that the connexion had then lasted three or four years. And this is sufficiently likely. Not only in Lawes's dedication of *Comus* by itself to Lord Brackley in 1637 do we hear of the "many favours"

with which he had been "*long* obliged" by Lord Brackley's parents, the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater (see the Dedication, prefixed to *Comus*); but it seems fair to assume that he who in 1634 was the successful and respected musical teacher of the three youngest of the family (Lady Alice, Lord Brackley, and Mr. Thomas Egerton), and who is known to have been the teacher of at least one of the family who was considerably older (Lady Mary), had been already for several years before 1634 connected with the family, and may have taught other members of it besides the four mentioned. In short, if we throw all the known facts into the strictest likelihood, it takes this form:—About 1630-31, Henry Lawes, then about thirty years of age, and already of distinction in the English musical world, though with much of his reputation still to make, reckoned among his chief patrons and employers the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater, who were the step-son and own daughter of the Countess-Dowager of Derby; and among his most hopeful pupils were several of the children of the Earl and Countess, grandchildren of the Countess-Dowager. Others of the Countess-Dowager's grandchildren may have been pupils of Lawes; but those of the Bridgewater branch were the most musical in their tastes, and it was to them, in their town-house in the Barbican, or in their country-seat at Ashridge, that Lawes's visits were most frequent. Quite possibly, it was they, who were at all events the most numerous group of the Countess-Dowager of Derby's grandchildren, that originated the notion of a masque in her honour. But, even if some of her relatives of the other groups were concerned in the plan, or admitted into it, the singing parts would fall to the Bridgewaters, and the arrangement of the music, and the general management, to their instructor, Lawes. Business of this kind was part of the profession of musical composers in those days, and Lawes, as we shall find (Introd. to *Comus*), was an expert in it.

An additional argument in favour of the idea that Lawes was the manager of the entertainment and arranged its music is found in the fact that the poetry for it was furnished by Milton. It has been imagined, indeed, that there may have been some bond of acquaintanceship between Milton and the Bridgewater family, or others of the Countess-Dowager of Derby's numerous progeny,

independently of Lawes. Might not such a bond have arisen from business-relations of Milton's father, the scrivener, with the noble house? All that we can say is that such *may* have been the case, for every life has minute ramifications not recoverable by biography. But it is mere conjecture, whereas Milton's intimacy with Lawes is a known fact. The friendship between the two, ot which many interesting proofs remain, may have begun even in Milton's boyhood. Noted as a musician as was Milton's own father, there can have been few musical artists in London that were not occasional visitors in his house in Bread Street; and there were many things in Lawes, when once he and the younger Milton were brought together, to rivet an attachment to him. Often, when in London from Cambridge in vacation-time, Milton would see Lawes, to talk with him on musical and poetical matters (for Lawes could write verse as well as compose airs), and to learn what songs of Herrick, Carew, or other living or dead English poets he had been last setting to music. Possibly already he had done that honour to some little pieces of Milton's own; and, at all events, Milton's poetical powers were known to him. Accordingly, when the notion of the Entertainment at Harefield had been started, and Lawes and his Bridgewater pupils, if our idea is correct, were busy over the project, it was to Milton that Lawes applied for the necessary words or *libretto*. If, as has been argued, the date was 1630 or 1631, Milton may have been up in London on one of his vacation visits. Perhaps, however, his father was already in possession of his country-place at Horton, and in that case Milton may have been there, and so actually within about ten miles, cross-country, from Harefield. Wherever it was that the two met to consult, Lawes about thirty years of age and Milton eight years younger, we can see what happened. Lawes explains to Milton the circumstances of the proposed entertainment and the kind ot thing that is wanted—namely, a speech and a song or two, to form the poetical gem of some larger pageant or show; and Milton meditating the affair for a few days, produces *Arcades* or *The Arcadians*.

Let the reader now go back in imagination to Harefield, on a spring or summer evening two hundred and forty years ago. Certain revels or pageants in the grounds have perhaps preceded,

and the time, we say, seems now to be evening. Harefield House is lit up; and in front of it, on a throne of state arranged so as to glitter in the light, is seated the aged Countess, with the seniors of the assembled party around her as spectators. Suddenly torches are seen flickering among the trees in the park, and out from among those trees, towards where the Countess is sitting, there bursts a band of nymphs and shepherds. They are, in fact, "*some noble persons of her family who appear on the scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state.*" When they have approached near enough, they pause, as if overcome by the splendour of the vision before them; and then one voice breaks out from the rest in recognition of the Countess. This is the first Song:

> " Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look !
> What sudden blaze of majesty
> Is that" &c.

This song ended, the nymphs and shepherds renew their approach to the object of their wonder; but, "*as they come forward, the Genius of the Wood* [Lawes ?] *appears, and turning toward them speaks.*" The speech of this Genius of the Wood is in eighty-three lines of blank verse. In it the Genius first addresses the shepherds, or male performers in the masque, and tells them he recognises them, through their disguise, as noble Arcadians; then he addresses the nymphs in a similar strain; then, after introducing himself as the Genius of the Wood, describing his occupations in that capacity, and descanting on his particular affection for music and his desire to do his best in that art in praise of her whom he has often admired in secret as the Queen of the place, and whom his auditory have come to gaze upon, he offers to lead them to her. Accordingly, lute or other instrument in hand, he advances, with this song, sung probably in solo:—

> " O'er the smooth enamelled green
> Where no print of step hath been
> Follow me" &c.

Following him, accordingly, the masquers do obeisance to the Lady, and range themselves round her; whereupon there is a third and concluding song, sung probably by many voices;

madrigal-wise, and ending with a repetition of the final words of the previous song :—

> "Such a rural queen
> All Arcadia hath not seen."

The entertainment was not probably yet over; but whatever more of it there was, out-of-doors or indoors, was not of Milton's composition.

Had Milton gone to Harefield to see his *Arcades* performed? It would be interesting to think that he had, and that the eyes of the venerable lady who, in her youth, had known Spenser and seen Shakespeare, may have rested with liking on this, their successor among English poets. There is one piece of evidence, however, which seems to debar the pleasure of any such romance. The original draft of the poem in Milton's own hand among the Cambridge MSS. was entitled at first simply "*Part of a Màske;*" and the title ARCADES is an after-insertion with his pen, in what can be proved to be his later handwriting, sometime between 1639 and 1645. Now that insertion takes this form: "ARCADES: *Part of an Entertainment at* ——;" a blank being left for the name of the place, as if Milton had forgotten it, or had never ascertained it. Before he could complete the title, as it now stands, for the edition of his Poems in 1645, he had probably to apply to Lawes. Of course, however, he cannot have forgotten that it was in honour of the venerable Countess-Dowager of Derby, Spenser's *Amaryllis* in her youth, that he had written the poem. And in this fact alone there is romance enough for us now. It brings Spenser and Milton picturesquely together within one length of Time's outstretched hand. "Vouchsafe, noble Lady," Spenser had said to Lady Strange in 1591, when dedicating to her his *Tears of the Muses*, "to accept this simple remembrance, though not worthy "of yourself, yet such as perhaps, by your acceptance thereof, "you may hereafter cull out a more meet and memorable evidence "of your own excellent deserts." May we not fondly construe these words into a prophecy in 1591 of Milton's *Arcades* in the same lady's honour in 1631?

The Countess-Dowager of Derby survived the entertainment only a few years. She died at Harefield, Jan. 26, 1636-7.

After her death the estate of Harefield descended to Lady Chandos, then her only remaining daughter; at whose death, in 1647, it came to her son, Lord Chandos. He bequeathed it, at his death in 1655, to his wife Jane, Lady Chandos, who married, for her second husband, Sir William Sedley, Bart., and for her third, George Pitt, Esq., of Strathfieldsaye, Hampshire. In 1673 she vested her estates in her third husband and his heir; and, in 1675, she being still alive, Harefield was sold to Sir Richard Newdegate, Bart., of Arbury, Warwickshire. By this purchase Sir Richard Newdegate only re-acquired property which had formerly been in the possession of his family. They had parted with it in 1585 to a Chief Justice Anderson, who had sold it in 1601 to Lord Keeper Egerton. Harefield is still in possession of the Newdegates. The place is worth visiting, not only as the scene of the *Arcades*, but for other reasons. Harefield House indeed has disappeared. It was burnt down in 1660, in consequence, it is said, of the carelessness of the witty Sir Charles Sedley, who was then on a visit to the place, and indulged in his habit of reading in bed. But the pedestrian on the road from Uxbridge to Rickmansworth may still identify the site of the House by two mounds, an old garden, and a large cedar of Lebanon, on the quiet slopes behind Harefield Church; and in the church itself he may see, besides other antiquities of interest, the tomb of the heroine of the *Arcades*. It is a richly-sculptured and heraldically emblazoned marble monument, exhibiting the effigy of the Countess in a crimson robe and gilt coronet recumbent under a canopy of pale green and stars, and, on the side, effigies of her three daughters in relief and also painted. The Countess is represented as in her youth, beautiful, and with long fair hair. The three daughters have the same long fair hair and like features.

COMUS:

"*A Masque, presented at Ludlow Castle,* 1634, *before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales.*"

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; prior printed edition of 1637; and two MS. copies—one, which was probably the family-copy or Lawes's stage-copy, in the library at Bridgewater House, and the other, which is the original draft in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.) The Bridgewater copy was printed in a special edition of *Comus,* published at Canterbury in 1798, by the Rev. H. J. Todd, afterwards well known as the editor of all Milton's Poetical Works.

The history of this, the most important of all the minor poems of Milton, is closely connected with that of the *Arcades,* and our introduction to the *Arcades* is partly also an introduction to the *Comus.* What of more specific introduction is necessary remains to be given here.

One branch of the relatives of the venerable Countess-Dowager of Derby, the heroine of the *Arcades,* consisted, as we have seen, of the members of the noble family of Bridgewater:—to wit, John, 1st Earl of Bridgewater, the Countess's stepson, being the son of her second husband, Lord Chancellor Ellesmere; this nobleman's wife, the Countess's second daughter, Lady Frances Stanley, by her first husband, Ferdinando, 5th Earl of Derby; and the numerous children born to this pair,—two of them daughters already married and with houses of their own, but other daughters still unmarried, and residing, together with their two boy-brothers, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, sometimes at their father's town-house in the Barbican, and sometimes at his country-seat of Ashridge in Hertfordshire. It is with these members of the Bridgewater family that we have chiefly to do in the *Comus.*

The Earl of Bridgewater, now about fifty-four years of age (he had been born in 1579), had a place among the nobility of the Court of Charles I. for which he was probably indebted to the fame and long services of his father, the Lord Chancellor. Already

a Privy Councillor, &c., he had, on the 26th of June, 1631, been nominated by Charles to the high office of the Viceroyalty of Wales, or, as it was more formally called, the office of "Lord President of the Council in the Principality of Wales and the Marches of the same." This office—including military command and civil jurisdiction, not only over the Welsh principality itself, but also over the four contiguous English counties of Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford, and Shropshire—had been filled, in Elizabeth's reign, by Sir Henry Sidney, the father of Sir Philip Sidney, and after him by Henry, 2nd Earl of Pembroke; and men of scarcely inferior note had held it since. The official seat of the Lord President was the town and castle of Ludlow in Shropshire, about twenty miles south from Shrewsbury, and beautifully situated in one of those tracts of green hilly country which mark the transition from England proper into Wales. The town, which was formerly walled, is mainly on an eminence near the junction of two streams, the Teme and the Corve, whose united waters flow on to meet the Severn in Worcestershire. On the highest ground of the town, and conspicuous to a great distance over the surrounding country, is Ludlow Church, a large, cathedral-looking building of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Near it, at a point where the ascending slope on which the town is built ends in a precipitous rock overhanging a steep valley through which the river runs, is Ludlow Castle, now a romantic ruin, but once a garrisoned place of strength, separately walled in from the town, and approached by a gateway from a kind of esplanade at the top of the main street. It was this Castle, with its outer court, inner court, keep, barracks, drawbridge, &c., that was more immediately the residence of the Presidents of Wales. The older portions of the castle dated from the Conquest, when they had been built by the Conqueror's kinsman, Roger de Montgomery; and there was hardly a part of the edifice but had its interesting legends and associations—legends and associations connected with the old wars of race between the Welsh and the Norman-English, or with those subsequent Wars of the Roses in which the Welsh had taken so active a share. Thus there were shown in the Castle certain rooms called "the Princes' Apartments," where Edward, Prince of Wales, and his young brother, the sons of Edward IV.,

had lived from 1472 to 1483, when they left Ludlow on that fatal journey which ended in their murder in the Tower. Arthur, Prince of Wales, the eldest son of Henry VII., had also resided in Ludlow Castle, with a court and under guardianship, by his father's arrangement; and Henry, himself a Welshman, had often visited his son there before the death of the Prince in 1502 made his brother, Henry, afterwards Henry VIII., the heir-apparent. In short, Ludlow Castle was, by long tradition, the proper seat of the government of Wales under the English crown; and, after the duties of that government came to be exercised, not nominally by the Princes of Wales and a Council under them, but by officials styled "Lords-President of the Council of the Principality and its Marches," the Castle was still kept in repair as a kind of palatial residence for these Lords-President.

Although appointed Lord President of Wales in June 1631, the Earl of Bridgewater does not seem to have assumed his functions actively, or to have gone near Ludlow, till sometime afterwards. On the 12th of May, 1633, his powers in his office were defined afresh by a Royal Lettei of Instructions, which was also to regulate the future proceedings, judicial and administrative, of the Council over which he presided. This Council was ostensibly to consist of upwards of eighty persons named in the Letter, among whom were many bishops and the chief state-officers of England, besides a number of knights and gentlemen of the Welsh border. But the real functionaries, under the Lord President, and responsible along with him, or in his absence, were to be these four salaried officers —Sir John Bridgman, Chief Justice of Chester; Sir Marmaduke Lloyd, Second Justice; Sir Nicholas Overbury; and Edward Waters, Esq. In all proceedings of the Council three were to be a quorum—of which three, however, the President, or, in his absence, the Vice-President or Chief Justice of Chester, must always be one. There can be no doubt that this redefinition, in May 1633, of the powers and constitution of the Welsh Presidency was part of that general scheme of a strong government, wherever possible, by officials acting directly for the Crown, which Charles found it the more necessary to depend upon since he had determined (1629) to have nothing more to do with English Parliaments. He had the very beau-ideal of such a Viceroy, or

Governor under the Crown, in Wentworth, who had been "President of the Council in the North," or, in other words, chief administrator of all England north of the Trent, with York for his head-quarters, since 1628, and had more recently (1632) been made also Viceroy of Ireland. It was hoped, perhaps, that the Earl of Bridgewater would be as efficient for the Crown in Wales and its borders as Wentworth had been in Yorkshire and the adjacent parts, and promised to be in Ireland.

In October 1633 the Earl sent his new Letter of Instructions to his Council at Ludlow, to be read and registered before his own arrival. At what time he followed in person we do not accurately know; but, when he did follow, the ceremonial of his inauguration was unusually splendid. He was attended "by a large concourse of the neighbouring nobility and gentry"—*i.e.*, we may suppose, by all of his Council then in those parts, and by other persons of local consequence. He had brought his Countess with him, and probably his whole family, from London or Ashridge—including, as we certainly know, his youngest daughter, the Lady Alice Egerton, a beautiful young girl, fourteen or fifteen years old, and her two younger brothers, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton. The festivities and hospitalities proper to such an occasion as the Earl's inauguration would naturally protract themselves over a considerable time. They did protract themselves, at all events, to Michaelmas-night, the 29th of September, 1634, when all Ludlow was astir with an unusual thing in those parts—nothing less than a complete masque, or poetical and musical entertainment, performed in the great hall of Ludlow Castle, by members of the Earl's family, before the Earl and an audience of assembled guests.

That there should be a masque at Ludlow to celebrate the Earl's entry on his Welsh Presidency was, in the circumstances of the family and with its musical and artistic tastes, almost a matter of course. Indeed, at this particular time, the English Court and aristocracy may be said to have been masque-mad. Popular as masques had been from Elizabeth's reign, and through James's, and most of all in Charles's, they were never more in fashion than in the years 1633 and 1634. Prynne's famous attack on theatres and all connected with them in his *Histriomastix* (1633) had just

then caused a reaction at Court and among families of rank in favour of theatrical entertainments. By way of resenting Prynne's supposed personal insult to Queen Henrietta Maria in that book, on account of her having acted in a private pastoral at Somerset House, the courtiers and public men took double delight in getting up pastorals and masques, and in acting in them. Nothing so magnificent, for example, in the shape of a pageant had ever been seen in England as that got up by the lawyers of the Four Inns of Court in February 1633-4 "as an expression of their love and duty to their Majesties." Months were spent in the preparation. Shirley was engaged to write the poetry; Mr. Simon Ivy and Mr. Henry Lawes to compose the music; Inigo Jones to construct the machinery; while some of the ablest and most eminent lawyers of the time, such as Selden, Attorney-General Noy, Bulstrode Whitlocke, and Mr. Hyde, acted zealously on the Committee of General Management. When the day came—Feb. 3—there was a gorgeous afternoon and evening procession of the masquers, with painted chariots, flaming torches, music, and wondrous grotesque accompaniments, from Holborn down Chancery Lane to Whitehall, the whole population of London having gathered along the route to see and to cheer; and, afterwards, in the Banqueting-house at Whitehall, the main masque itself, Shirley's *Triumph of Peace*, was performed before their Majesties with every possible magnificence. The whole affair cost the Four Inns of Court 21,000*l.*; whereof 1,000*l.* were spent on the music — Lawes and his fellow-composer receiving 100*l.* apiece for their share.[1] The actors in this masque were chiefly handsome lawyers of the Four Inns, whose names are now unknown. But, a fortnight later, in the same Banqueting-house at Whitehall, there was another masque, of scarcely inferior magnificence, given by their Majesties themselves, and in which the actors were the King, fourteen of the chief nobles, and ten young sons of noblemen. This was Carew's *Cœlum Britannicum*, performed on Shrove-Tuesday night, Feb. 18, 1633-4. The music to this masque was by Henry Lawes; the machinery by Inigo Jones;

[1] Whitlocke's Memorials, *sub anno* 1633; and Shirley's Works, by Dyce, vol. vi. pp. 257—261.

and among the young noblemen who took juvenile parts in it were the Earl of Bridgewater's two sons, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, and their cousin Lord Chandos.

With a recollection of the *Arcades*, and probably of many other such private theatrical delights, traditional in the Bridgewater family; with the two young boys fresh from the glory of their small parts in the recent royal masque of *Cœlum Britannicum;* above all, with Lawes, the musical tutor of the family, radiant from his musical success in that masque and in its more gorgeous predecessor, the masque of *The Triumph of Peace* by the Four Inns of Court;—what more natural than that it should be resolved to seize the opportunity of the Earl's entry on his Welsh Presidency for a masque on a great scale that should astonish the Welsh and all the West of England? The youngsters and Lawes probably devised the thing; and, the Earl having given his consent, all was arranged. The preparations must have been begun months before the masque actually came off—probably while the family were yet in London. Lawes, of course, was to take care of the music and was to be general manager; and the other actors and singers were to be the young people of the family. But who should write the poetry? Who but Lawes's friend, Mr. Milton, who had already in the *Arcades* given such satisfactory proofs of his fitness for the kind of composition that was wanted? In fact, whether to please himself, or to oblige Lawes, or to oblige the Earl of Bridgewater and his family on account of some bond of acquaintance with the family now not recoverable, Milton did undertake to write the masque. The composition of it, we must suppose, occupied him at Horton for several weeks, or even a month or two, during the early part of 1634.

On undertaking to write the masque, Milton would think of some appropriate story, to be shaped into a dramatic pastoral of the required kind, for representation on a stage in the hall of a great Castle by young lords and ladies, and with songs interspersed, to be sung by some of these performers to airs by his friend Lawes. The nature and circumstances of the occasion would be vividly present to his imagination—the Earl entering on his office as President of the ancient Principality; his retinue, with Welsh and West-of-England gentry among them; the town and castle

of Ludlow, and their neighbourhood, as conceived by him from descriptions, or perhaps seen by him (who knows?) in some tour of his own into those parts; the proximity of the place to Welsh scenery, and the connexion of the occasion with ancient British memories and legends. He would, doubtless, co-operate with Lawes, and would give or receive hints. But how the actual story of *Comus* occurred to Milton—the story of the young lady parted from her two brothers at night in the depths of a wild wood, found there by Comus and his crew of evil revellers, and lured and detained by their enchantments, until the Brothers, instructed by a good Attendant Spirit in the shape of their father's faithful shepherd, Thyrsis, rush in and rescue her—how this story occurred to Milton we can but vaguely surmise. He may have derived the conception of such a plot from some of his readings, and may have seen its fitness for his purpose; and commentators have referred more particularly to certain books which may have suggested the plot to him, or details in the treatment. A somewhat different theory is that Milton, in his *Comus*, only dramatised a real incident. The popular tradition round about Ludlow still is that the Lady Alice Egerton and her two young brothers, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, were actually benighted in Haywood Forest, near Ludlow, as they were on their way to Ludlow from a visit to the house of their relatives, the Egertons, in Herefordshire, and that the Lady Alice was for some time lost by her brothers in the forest. Milton, the tradition adds, had heard of this incident, and constructed his *Comus* upon it. To us, however, it appears more likely that the story of the loss of Lady Alice and her brothers in Haywood Forest grew out of the *Comus* than that the *Comus* grew out of the story. The story was current more than a hundred years ago; but it consists with our knowledge of the way in which such legends arise to suppose that by that time the parting of the lady and her brothers in the masque had been translated, by prosaic gossip on the spot, into a literal incident in the lives of those for whom the masque was written.

In whatever way suggested, the masque was written with most definite attention to the purpose for which it was required. The characters to be represented were as follows:—

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT; *first appearing as such, but afterwards in the dress of the shepherd* THYRSIS.
COMUS, *with his Crew.*
THE LADY.
FIRST BROTHER.
SECOND BROTHER.
SABRINA, *the Nymph of the Severn river, with attendant Water-nymphs.*

Here, if we omit the "crew of Comus" and Sabrina's "attendant water-nymphs"— parts of mere dumb show, which may have been assigned to supernumeraries—there were six speaking and singing parts to be filled up. How were these parts cast? As to four of the parts we have definite information from Lawes. The part of THE LADY, which is the central part in the masque, was given to the Lady Alice Egerton; and the parts of the FIRST BROTHER and the SECOND BROTHER fell to Lady Alice's two boy-brothers, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton. The important part of THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *afterwards* THYRSIS, was taken by Lawes himself. This leaves but two parts unassigned —those of COMUS and SABRINA. The part of COMUS is important, and a good actor was needed for it; that of SABRINA is less important, and required chiefly a good singer. There was, we may assume, among the connexions of the Bridgewater family, some handsome gentleman who did not object to act as the disreputable Riot-god, son of Bacchus and Circe, for the opportunity of luring away the sweet Lady Alice even for a little while; and among Lady Alice's sisters there was more than one fit for the part of the River-nymph. It is a pity, however, that the names of the actors in these two parts have not been preserved.

Suppose Milton's MS. of the masque finished (the draft, in his own hand, now among the Cambridge MSS.); suppose that Lawes has copies for his own use and that of his pupils (one of those copies, perhaps, that now in the Bridgewater Library, which Todd believed to be in Lawes's hand); suppose the rehearsals over (some of which may have been in London or at Ashridge, before the actors went to Ludlow); and suppose the memorable Michaelmas-night, Sept. 29, 1634, arrived! The great Hall of Ludlow Castle is filled with guests. It is a noble apartment, sixty feet long and thirty wide, in which, according to tradition, the elder of the two

Princes murdered in the Tower had been proclaimed King, with the title of Edward V., before commencing his fatal journey to London. It is the place of all great state-meetings of the Council of the Presidency. But on this evening it is converted into a theatre and brilliantly lighted. While the Earl and Countess and the rest of the seated audience occupy the main portion of the hall, one end of it is fitted up as a stage, with curtains, &c. Here the performance begins. "*The first scene discovers a wild wood: The Attendant Spirit descends or enters.*" Such is the stage-direction; the meaning of which is that, the stage having been darkened to signify that it is night, and there being paintings or other contrivances in the background to represent a wood, Lawes "descends or enters." In the printed copies, and also in the Cambridge MS., he begins with a speech; but in the Bridgewater MS. this speech is preceded by a song of twenty lines, the opening lines of which are—

> "From the heavens now I fly,
> And those happy climes that lie
> Where day never shuts his eye
> Up in the broad fields of the sky."

There is no doubt that the Bridgewater MS., being the stage-copy, here represents what did actually happen. Milton had intended the masque to begin with a speech; but Lawes, thinking it better for stage-purposes to begin with a song, had taken the liberty of transferring to this point a portion of that which now stands, and which Milton intended to stand, as the *final* song or *epilogue* of the Attendant Spirit at the end of the masque. In that final song or epilogue, as we now have it, the Attendant Spirit, announcing his *departure*, when the play is over, says—

> "To the ocean now I fly,
> And those happy climes that lie
> Where day never shuts his eye
> Up in the broad fields of the sky."—

which lines, with a part of their sequel, Lawes, it will be seen, converted cleverly into a prologue, or song of *arrival*, by the change of "*To the ocean*" into "*From the heavens.*" He doubtless thought it more effective to "descend" on the stage, singing this prologue; after which, when *on* the stage, he made the speech

announcing the purpose for which he had descended. In that speech, after introducing himself in his character as an attendant Spirit of Good, sent down to Earth from Jove's realms on a special errand, he thus informs the audience at the outset as to the general drift of the play they are about to witness, and connects it gracefully with the actual circumstances of the Earl of Bridgewater's presence among them, and his entering on so high a British office as the Welsh Presidency—

> "Neptune, besides the sway
> Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
> Took in, by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,
> Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
> That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
> The unadornèd bosom of the deep;
> Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
> By course commits to several government,
> And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
> And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,
> The greatest and the best of all the main,
> He quarters to his blue-haired deities;
> *And all this tract that fronts the falling sun*
> *A noble Peer of mickle trust and power*
> *Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide*
> *An old and haughty nation proud in arms:*
> *Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,*
> *Are coming to attend their father's state*
> *And new-entrusted sceptre.* But their way
> Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
> The nodding horror of whose shady brows
> Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
> And here their tender age might suffer peril,
> But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
> I was despatched for their defence and guard."

Prepared by these words, and by the farther explanation of the Attendant Spirit that the wood is haunted by the god Comus and his crew of revellers, who waylay travellers and tempt them with an enchanted liquor which changes the countenances of those who partake into the faces of beasts, the audience see the story developed in action before them. They see Comus and his crew appear in the wood with torches, making a riotous and unruly noise—Comus, with a charming-rod in one hand and a glass in the other; and his crew, a set of monsters, with bodies of men

and women in glistering apparel, but headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts. They see the crew knit hands and dance, and the dance broken off, by the orders of Comus, at the sound of a light footstep approaching. They see the crew then disappear among the trees, leaving their master alone, who knows that the footstep is that of some benighted virgin, and who, after throwing his "dazzling spells" (*query*, some blaze of blue light?) in the direction in which she is coming, also steps aside to watch. Then they see "the Lady" enter—the sweet Lady Alice, received, of course, with rapturous applause. They hear her explain how she has lost her brothers since sunset, how it is now midnight, how the rude sounds of revelry have attracted her to the spot, and how the darkness and the silence would alarm her were it not for her trust in a higher Power, guarding virtuous minds. As she speaks there comes a gleam through the grove; and, thinking her brothers may be near, she will guide them to her by a song. Accordingly, she sings the song beginning "*Sweet Echo*"—the first song in the masque, according to Milton's arrangement of it, but the second in Lawes's stage-arrangement. It is not her brothers that the song brings to her, but Comus, who has been listening in admiration. Appearing before her in the guise of a shepherd, he tells her he has seen her brothers, and offers to lead her to them, or to lodge her in his humble cottage till they can be found in the morning. Scarcely has she accepted the offer and left the scene with Comus, when her two brothers—the boys, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, also greatly cheered, of course—appear. They discuss with great anxiety the situation of their sister, the elder comforting the younger, till their conversation is interrupted by a far-off holloa. Lest it should be a robber, they draw their swords. But it is their father's faithful shepherd, Thyrsis; or rather they think it is he—for, in reality, it is the good Attendant Spirit, who has been taking note of all that has befallen the lady, and who, in meeting the brothers, has assumed the disguise of one well known to them. He explains the state of affairs, and greatly alarms the younger brother by his account of Comus and his crew. The elder, though more steady, is for rushing at once to the haunt of the magician and dragging him to death. But the Attendant Spirit, as Thyrsis, explaining that such violence will be

vain against the craft of a Sorcerer, proposes rather that they should avail themselves of the power of a certain precious plant, called *Hæmony*, of which a portion had once been given him by a certain skilful shepherd-lad of his acquaintance. He had tested the virtue of this plant to ward off enchantments, for he had already approached Comus safely by means of it; and he now proposes that they should all three confront Comus with its aid. The Brothers agree, and they and the supposed Thyrsis go off. Then the scene changes before the eyes of the audience, representing "a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness; soft music; tables spread with dainties;" the Lady in an enchanted chair, with Comus pressing her to drink out of a glass, while his rabble stand around. There is a matchless dialogue between the Lady and Comus—an argument of Purity or Abstinence against Sensuality, in which Purity overcomes and defies its enemy. The Sorcerer, awed, but still persevering, prays the Lady only to taste, when her brothers rush in with drawn swords, wrest the glass from his hand, and dash it to pieces. Comus and his crew resist slightly, but are driven away and dispersed. Thyrsis then, coming in after the Brothers, finds that unfortunately they have not attended to his instruction to seize the enchanter's wand. The Lady is still marble-bound to her chair, from which the motion of the wand might have freed her. To effect this Thyrsis proposes a new device. It is to invoke Sabrina, the nymph of the adjacent and far-famed Severn river. Who so likely to succour distressed maidenhood as she, that daughter of Locrine, the son of Brutus, who, as ancient British legends told, had flung herself, to preserve her honour, into the stream which had since borne her name? By way of invocation of Sabrina, Thyrsis (*i.e.* Lawes) sings what is now the second song in the masque, but is the third in Lawes's arrangement—the exquisite song beginning "*Sabrina fair.*" Obeying the invocation, Sabrina rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings the song "*By the rushy-fringèd bank*"—the third song in Milton's arrangement, the fourth in Lawes's. She then performs the expected office of releasing the Lady by sprinkling drops of pure water upon her, and touching thrice her lips and finger-tips. Sabrina descends, and the Lady rises from her seat. But, though she is now free from the spell of Comus in his enchanted wood,

it remains to convey her and her brothers safely to their father's residence, where their arrival is waited for. Accordingly, after an ode of thanks to Sabrina for her good service, with blessings on the stream that bears her name, the supposed Thyrsis continues:—

"Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the Sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through the gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport;
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste! the stars grow high,
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky."

Thyrsis, the Lady, and the two Brothers, here leave the stage, and are supposed to be gradually wending their way, through the wood, while it is still night, or very early morning, towards Ludlow Castle. While the spectators are imagining this, the journey of some furlongs is actually achieved; for straightway "*the scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town and the President's Castle: then come in country-dancers: after them the Attendant Spirit, with the two Brothers and the Lady.*" In this stage-direction it seems to be implied that the spectators now looked on some canvas at the back of the stage, representing Ludlow Town, and the exterior of the very castle they were sitting in, all bright on a sunshiny morning, and that, as they looked, there came in first a bevy of rustic lads and lasses, or representatives of such, dancing and making merry, till their clodhopping rounds were interrupted by the appearance among them of the guardian Thyrsis and the three graceful young ones. This is confirmed by what Thyrsis says to

the dancers in the song which stands fourth in the printed masque, but must have been the fifth in the actual performance:—

"Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sunshine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas."

So dismissed, the clodhoppers vanish; and there remain on the stage, facing the Earl and Countess and the audience, only (we may drop the disguise now, as doubtless the audience did in their cheering) the musician Lawes, the Lady Alice, and her brothers Viscount Brackley and Master Thomas Egerton. Advancing towards the Earl and Countess, Lawes presents to them his charge with this continuation of his last song:—

"Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own," &c.

There seems still to have been a dance at this point, to show off the courtly grace of the young people after the thumping energy of the clodhoppers; for at the end of Lawes's song there comes this last stage-direction, "*The dances ended, the Spirit epiloguizes.*" That is to say, Lawes, relapsing into his character of the Attendant Spirit who had descended from Heaven at the beginning of the piece, and had acted so beneficially through it in the guise of the shepherd Thyrsis, winds up the whole by a final speech or song as he slowly recedes or reascends. In our printed copies the Epilogue is a longish speech; but, as part of that speech, as we have seen, had been transferred, in the actual performance, to the beginning of the masque as the Spirit's opening song, so in the actual performance the closing lines of the Epilogue as we now have it served as the Spirit's song of reascent or departure in two stanzas:

"Now my task is smoothly done:
I can fly, or I can run,
Quickly to the green Earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,

And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.

"Mortals that would follow me,
Love Virtue! She alone is free:
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

And so, "with these sounds left on the ear, and a final glow of "angelic light on the eye, the performance ends, and the audience "rises and disperses through the Castle. The Castle is now a "crumbling ruin, along the ivy-clad walls and through the dark "passages of which the visitor clambers or gropes his way, dis-"turbing the crows and the martlets in their recesses; but one "can stand yet in the doorway through which the parting guests "of that night descended into the inner court; and one can see "where the stage was, on which the sister was lost by her brothers, "and Comus revelled with his crew, and the lady was fixed as "marble by enchantment, and the swains danced in welcome of "the Earl, and the Spirit ascended gloriously to his native heaven. "More mystic still it is to leave the ruins, and, descending one "of the winding streets of Ludlow that lead from the Castle to "the valley of the Teme, to look upwards to Castle and Town "seen as one picture, and, marking more expressly the three long "pointed windows that gracefully slit the chief face of the wall "towards the north, to realize that it was from that ruin and from "those windows in the ruin that the verse of *Comus* was first "shook into the air of England."——So I wrote a good few years ago, when the impressions of a visit I made to Ludlow for the sake of Milton were fresh and vivid; and, as I copy the words now, they bring back, as it were in a dream, the pleasant memory of one bygone day. I remember my first sight of the hilly town as I walked into it early on a summer's morning, when not a soul was astir, and the clean streets were all silent and shuttered; then my ramble at my own will for an hour or so over the Castle ruins and the green knoll they crown, undisturbed by guide or any figure of fellow-tourist; then my descent again, past and round the great church and its tombs, into the steep town streets,

now beginning their bustle for a market-day; and, finally, the lazy circuit I made round the green outskirts of the town, through I know not what glens and up their sloping sides, the ruined Castle always finely distinct close at hand, and in the distance, wherever the eye could range unopposed, a fairy horizon of dim blue mountains.

Perhaps there has not been sufficient recognition of the importance of the production of *Comus* at Ludlow Castle at the Michaelmas of 1634 as an epoch in Milton's life. That it was by far the most considerable thing that Milton had yet written, and that the date and the circumstances of the accession of such a poem to the previous stock of the best English Poetry deserve to be carefully marked in the History of our Literature, we do indeed recognise. But, if we transfer ourselves back historically to that date and its circumstances, we ought to recognise something more. We ought to recognise that some beginnings of that feeling about Milton which *we* now have must then have arisen among all who witnessed the performance of *Comus* or were involved in the rumour of it. Here, far away on the Welsh border, at the inauguration of the Earl of Bridgewater in his Welsh Presidency, there had been produced a masque, by an unknown author, as extensive as Carew's recent masque of *Cœlum Britannicum* or Shirley's of *The Triumph of Peace,* both recently acted in London before Royalty, and from the splendours of which London theatre-goers were only recovering their composure. Nay, not only as extensive as these masques, but, in every respect of pure poetical beauty, artistic construction, and sweetness of moral influence, beating these masques, or even the best of Ben Jonson's, veteran and laureate though he was, into mere mediocrity, if not into vulgarity and slipshod! Very likely, as much as this was not actually said; for the unknown has always to make its way, and Shirley and Carew were then established somebodies, and Ben Jonson, that real mass of a man, was in his well-merited ascendancy in the literature of England. But, within the circle that saw *Comus* acted or heard of it, something tending in this direction must have been *felt.* Among the gentry of the Welsh border, not to speak of the accomplished and musical members of the

Bridgewater family itself, there must have been critics capable of forming an opinion of a poem like *Comus* at the moment, and generous enough to spread it by talk afterwards. True, there was no fun or horse-play in the masque, such as a motley audience likes; the machinery and the decorations can have been nothing so splendid as those of the recent masques at Court; and it may even have been a trial of patience to sit for two or three hours listening to speeches recited and songs sung by six actors, three of whom were mere children. But the quality of the songs and the speeches must have asserted itself with the best judges through all that disadvantage; a great deal depended upon Lawes himself and his songs; and the Bridgewater children, besides being interesting personally to the spectators, may have been effective little elocutionists. On the whole, we cannot doubt that the masque was a success, and a week's wonder at Ludlow.

There is no evidence that Milton himself had taken the journey of 150 miles from London or Horton in order to be present at the performance. It is possible that he had done so; but it is just as possible that he had not, and even that the authorship of the masque was kept a secret at the time of its performance, known only to Lawes, or to Lawes and the Earl's family. But the Earl of Bridgewater's masque began to be talked of beyond Ludlow; as time passed, and the rumour of it spread, and perhaps the songs in it were carried vocally into London society by Lawes and his pupils of the Bridgewater family, it was still more talked of; and there came to be inquiries respecting its authorship, and requests for copies of it, and especially of the songs. All this we learn from Lawes. His loyalty to his friend Milton in the whole affair was admirable; and he appears to have been more proud, in his own heart, of his concern with the comparatively quiet Bridgewater masque than with his more blazoned and well-paid co-operation in the London masques of the same year. The music which he composed for the songs in *Comus* still exists, written out in his own hand and signed with his name, on a single sheet of old music paper (Add. MSS., Brit. Mus., No. 11,518), with this heading—"*Five Songs set for a Mask presented at Ludlo Castle before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of the Marches:*

October 1634."[1] It is probably but one of many copies which he made to gratify his musical friends. But there were many friends of his, it appears, who were not satisfied with copies of the songs and their music only, but wanted complete copies of the masque. To relieve himself from the trouble so occasioned, Lawes resolved at length to publish the masque. He did so in 1637 in a small, and now very rare, quarto of 40 pages, with this title-page:—

"A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, on Michaelmasse Night, before the Right Honourable John, Earle of Bridgewater, Viscount Brackley, Lord President of Wales, and one of his Majesties' most honourable Privy Counsell.

'*Eheu quid volui misero mihi! floribus Austrum*
Perditus—'

London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the signe of the Three Pidgeons in Paul's Churchyard, 1637."

The volume was dedicated by Lawes to the Earl's son and heir, young Viscount Brackley, who had acted the part of Elder Brother in the masque. The Dedication complete will be found prefixed to *Comus* in the present edition; but its opening sentences may be quoted here. "My Lord," says Lawes to the young Viscount, still but a boy of fifteen years, "this Poem, which "received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of "your noble family, and much honour from your own person in "the performance, now returns again to make a final dedication "of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the "Author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much "desired that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give "my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity "of producing it to the public view." From this we learn that the proposal of publication was Lawes's own, and that Milton still preferred the shelter of the anonymous. That Lawes had Milton's consent, however, is proved by the motto on the title-page. It is from Virgil's Second Eclogue, and must certainly have been supplied by Milton. "Alas! what have I chosen for

1 The Five Songs in this MS. answer, with one omission, to the enumeration of the Songs in their series given in our description of the masque as performed. They are:—(1) *From the Heavens.* (2) *Sweet Echo.* (3) *Sabrina fair.* (4) *Back, Shepherds, back,* with its continuation *Noble Lord and Lady bright.* (5) *Now my task.* The Song wanting is the Song of the nymph Sabrina, *By the rushy-fringèd bank.*

my wretched self! thus on my flowers, infatuated that I am, letting in the rude wind!" So says the shepherd in Virgil's Eclogue; and Milton, in borrowing the words, hints his fear that he may have done ill in letting his *Comus* be published. Though he was now twenty-eight years of age, it was actually, with hardly an exception, his first public venture in print.

He had no reason to regret the venture. "*Comus*," says Hallam, "was sufficient to convince any one of taste and feeling "that a great poet had arisen in England, and one partly formed "in a different school from his contemporaries." Such a strong statement is easily made now; but there may have been some in England capable of forming it when it was a merit to form it, *i.e.* in 1637 (the year of Ben Jonson's death), when modest copies of Lawes's edition, without the author's name, were first in circulation. We know of one Englishman, at all events, who did form it and express it. This was Milton's near neighbour at Horton, Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton College. Born in 1568, mixed up with political affairs in Elizabeth's reign, and in the height of his active career through that of James—when he had been English Ambassador to various foreign Courts, but had resided, in that capacity, most continuously at Venice—Sir Henry, since Charles came to the throne, had been in veteran retirement in the quiet post of the Eton provostship, respected by all England for his past diplomatic services, but living chiefly on his memories of those services, his Italian experiences in particular, and in the delights of pictures, books, and scholarly society. Some chance introduction had brought Milton and the aged Knight together for the first time early in 1638, when Milton was preparing for his journey to Italy; and on the 6th of April in that year Milton, by way of parting acknowledgment of Sir Henry's courtesy, sent him a letter with a copy of Lawes's edition of his *Comus*. Sir Henry, it appears, had read the poem in a previous copy, without knowing who was the author; and, writing in reply to Milton on the 13th of April, just in time to overtake him before he left England, he mentioned this fact, and expressed his pleasure at finding that a poem that he had liked so singularly was by his neighbour and new acquaintance. "A dainty piece of entertain- "ment," he calls it, "wherein I should much commend the tragical

"part [*i.e.* the dialogue] if the lyrical did not ravish me with a "certain Doric delicacy in your songs and odes; whereunto I "must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our "language." Here was praise worth having, and which did, as we know, gratify Milton. He was actually on the move towards Italy when he read Sir Henry Wotton's letter.

When, in 1645, six years after his return from Italy, Milton, then in the very midst of his pamphleteering activity, and of the ill-will which it had brought him, consented to the publication by Moseley of the first collective edition of his Poems, *Comus* was still, in respect of length and merit, his chief poetical achievement. Accordingly, he not only reprinted it in that edition, but gave it the place of honour there. He put it last of the English Poems, as a bulky little poem by itself, occupying as much space as all the rest together (pp. 67–120); and he gave it a separate title-page, thus:—"*A Mask of the same Author, presented at Ludlow Castle,* 1634, *before the Earl of Bridgewater, then President of Wales: Anno Dom.* 1645." The title-page of Lawes's edition of 1637 was, of course, cancelled by this new one; but Lawes's Dedication of that edition to young Viscount Brackley was retained, and there was inserted also, by way of pendant to that Dedication, Sir Henry Wotton's courteous letter of April 13, 1638. The courteous old Sir Henry was then dead, but Milton rightly considered that his word from the grave might be important in the circumstances. And so this Second Edition of the *Comus,* thus distinguished and set off as part of the First collective Edition of the Poems, served all the demand till 1673, when the Second collective Edition of the Poems appeared. *Comus* was, of course, retained in that edition, as still the largest and chief of Milton's minor Poems; but it was made less mechanically conspicuous than in the earlier edition. It did not come last among the English Poems, being followed by the translations of some Psalms; and it had no separate title-page, but only the heading, "*A Mask presented at Ludlow Castle,* 1634, &c." Lawes's Dedication of the edition of 1637 and Sir Henry Wotton's Letter were likewise omitted.

In none of the three first printed editions, it will be observed (Lawes's of 1637, Milton's of 1645, and Milton's of 1673), is the

poem entitled COMUS. Nor is there any such title in Milton's original Draft among the Cambridge MSS,, nor in that Bridgewater transcript which is supposed to have been the stage-copy. "*A Mask presented*," &c.: such, with slight variations in the phrasing, was the somewhat vague name of the piece while Milton lived. It was really inconvenient, however, that such a poem should be without a briefer and more specific name. Accordingly, that of COMUS, from one of the chief persons of the drama, has been unanimously and very properly adopted.

Although the word *comus*, or *κῶμος*, signifying "revel" or "carousal," or sometimes "a band of revellers," is an old Greek common noun, with various cognate terms (such as *κωμάζω*, "to revel," and *κωμῳδία*, comedy), the personification or proper name COMUS appears to have been an invention of the later classic mythology. A passage is indeed cited from the Agamemnon of Æschylus (1191—1193) where *κῶμος* may be construed in a personal sense; but such a construction of that passage is rather forced. So far was Κῶμος from being a distinct deity among the older Greeks that the *κῶμοι* or revels we most frequently hear of among them were revels in honour of Bacchus. Gradually, however, when Mythology became more of a conscious poetical art, *Comus* emerged as a person, the God of Mirth, just as we might raise our common noun *revel* to the personage *Revel* by the use of a capital letter. In the Εἰκόνες, or "Descriptions of Pictures," by Philostratus, a Greek author of the third century of our era, COMUS is represented as a winged god, seen in one picture "drunk and languid after a repast, his head sunk on his breast, slumbering in a standing attitude, and his legs crossed" (Smith's Dict. of Greek and Roman Biog. and Myth.). But, in fact, poets were left at liberty to fancy Comus, or the god Revel, very much as their own notions of what constitutes mirth or revel directed them; and the use of this liberty might perhaps be traced in the tradition of Comus, and the allusions to him in the poetry of different modern nations, down to Milton's time. He is an occasional personage among the English Elizabethan poets; and he figures especially in Ben Jonson's masque of "*Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, presented at Court before King James, 1619."

In this masque the scene was a mountain, all snow and frost

atop, and the rest wood and rock. Just beneath the snowy top was a grove of ivy: "out of which, to a wild music of cymbals, "flutes, and tabors, is brought forth COMUS, the god of Cheer "or the Belly, riding in triumph, his head crowned with roses "and other flowers, his hair curled: they that wait upon him "crowned with ivy, their javelins done about with it: one of "them going with Hercules's bowl bare before him, while the "rest present him [Comus] with this Hymn, full chorus:—

"Room, room! make room for the Bouncing Belly,
First father of sauce and deviser of jelly,
Prime master of arts and the giver of wit,
That found out the excellent engine the spit.

* * * * *

Hail, hail, plump paunch! O the founder of taste
For fresh meats, or powdered, or pickle, or paste;
Devourer of broiled, baked, roasted, or sod;
An emptier of cups, be they even or odd:
All which have now made thee so wide in the waist
As scarce with no pudding thou art to be laced;
But, eating and drinking until thou dost nod,
Thou break'st all thy girdles, and break'st forth a god."

This is Ben Jonson's ideal of Comus, or Revel, very characteristic of Ben himself, and sustained through the rest of the short masque. Milton may have read that masque and helped himself to any suggestion it could give him. How little that can have been will appear to any one who will take the trouble to read the masque in Ben Jonson's Works.

A work to which it is far more likely that Milton was in some small degree indebted is a Latin extravaganza, called *Comus, sive Phagesiposia Cimmeria: Somnium*, by the Dutchman Erycius Puteanus. This writer, whose real name was Hendrik van der Putten, was born at Venlo in Holland in 1574, and, after having been for some time in Italy, became Professor of Eloquence and Classical Literature at Louvain, where he died in 1646. He was "the author of an infinity of books," says Bayle (Dict.: Art. Puteanus); among which was the one whose title we have given. It was first published in 1608; but there were subsequent editions, including one brought out at Oxford in 1634, the very year of Milton's masque. "The subject of the piece of Erycius Puteanus,

"which is written mostly in prose, with a mixture of verse, is the "description of a dream in which Comus, the genius of Love "and Cheerfulness, appears to the author, declares himself the "lord of the whole wide realm of pleasure, and briefly expounds "his voluptuous idea of life. As the amazed author is wishing "himself wings that he might quickly be off, he is veiled in a "cloud, and carried away into the region of Night, the land of the "Cimmerians. The cloud parting, he sees in a retreating valley "a wondrous structure, the palace of Comus. His friend Aderba "now comes up, and both go in to mingle with the crew of "bacchants rioting within. There follow them Night, Darkness, "Sleep, Silence, Fear and Horror; who, however, at the en-"trance are scared away by the light of torches and the flash "of metal. Within, the godheads of Love, Pleasure, Joy, Rap-"ture and Delight, with Jest and Laughter, extend their bloom-"ing realm. A feast is celebrated, the guests at which are masked; "but those that one takes for men, it is said, are Daunian and "Getulian wolves, dangerous monsters by their bite, hiding their "true nature under masks and hypocritical appearances. After "this, the two find, at the door to a sanctuary, a youth standing "with amphora and cups, which he tenders to those entering. "They also go in here, after having drunk of the wine. Aderba, "anxious to know who are the gods there worshipped, learns "on inquiry that they are *Hortorum Deus*, *Virginensis*, *Subjugus*, "*Prema*, *Pertunda*. Comus, whose image represents him half "in light, half in darkness, as in the struggle of night with "tapers, is found at a brilliant table surrounded by all the re-"finements of luxury. There arrives now a friend of the two "that have hitherto been spectâtors, called Tabutius, and, after-"wards, yet another, named Hyläus. Tabutius, an old man, who "has acquired wisdom from a joyfully spent youth, explains in "detail that Comus is a tyrant over fresh youth and manhood, "who, by pretence of friendliness and false show of pleasure, "captivates souls, but enervates them, banishing candid Sincerity, "and giving reception on the contrary to Seeming and Deceit, "and that his companions, Luxury and Lust, enslave men and "stifle in them everything noble. The festival dedicated to the "honour of Comus takes the name of *Phagesia* or *Phagesiposia*,

"and consists in a mere banquet; but after it Lust is honoured "with drunken dances. During the feast Comus sings an ode on "the mysteries of his worship, composed throughout in Catalectic "Iambic Dimeters [*i.e.* Latin Anacreontics]. Then Tabutius "begins to moralize prolixly, and continues with slight interrup- "tions. The themes which he handles are drunkenness, excess "in eating, frequent banquets, ill assortment of guests, conversa- "tion at table; then dancing, costliness of apparel, and the like. "From page to page the expositions protract themselves. The "end comes in the common form of a boundless banquet led on "with noise and fury. When all is going topsy-turvy, Comus, "who has seen himself despised, disappears with Luxury and "Lust. Night breaks, and the dreamer awakes at length to the "renewed enjoyment of light."[1]

The Comus of the Latin Extravaganza of the Dutch Puteanus, it will be seen, is a decidedly more graceful being than the lumbering god of good cheer in Ben Jonson's masque. He also, like Ben Jonson's Comus, is represented with curled and rose-crowned hair, but he is "soft-gestured and youthful," and personates a more subtle notion of Revel. Now there are touches of likeness between Puteanus's god, his guise and retinue, and the Comus of Milton, with his charming-rod and glass, and his rout of men and women headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts; and, as may be pointed out in the Notes, there are occasional phrases in Milton's masque so like suggestions from passages in the prose or the verse of Puteanus's little performance that it is difficult to imagine Milton had not read those passages. Indeed Ben Jonson may have read them too. After all, however, Milton's Comus is a creation of his own, for which he was as little indebted intrinsically to Puteanus as to Ben Jonson. Here is his myth of the birth and life of Comus, put into the mouth of the Attendant Spirit at the opening of the masque, and introduced, it will be observed, with words which distinctly claim the myth as one of his own invention:—

[1] I have abridged this sketch of the plot of the Extravaganza of Puteanus from a learned little book by Dr. Immanuel Schmidt, published at Berlin 1860, under the title of *Milton's Comus: uebersetzt, und mit einer erläuternden Abhandlung begleitet.* Todd refers to Puteanus and quotes a few passages from him, but gives no such coherent account of the story.

"I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song
From old or modern bard in hall or bower.
  Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's Island fell (who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?).
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks
With ivy-berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades embowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty."

Here Milton, for the purpose of his masque at Ludlow Castle, is bold enough to add a bran-new god, no less, to the classic Pantheon, and to import him into Britain, and particularly into Shropshire. Observe his parentage. Comus, the god of Sensual Pleasure, is not, with Milton, mere Gluttony, as he is in Jonson's masque; nor is he the mere modification of Feast and the Wine-god pictured by Philostratus and adopted by Puteanus. He is a son of the Wine-god certainly, but it is by the sorceress Circe; and, though he has much of his father's nature, he has more of the thrilling mercilessness and magical subtlety of his mother's.

It is not for nothing that Milton, in his account of him, almost cites the description of Circe and her enchanted Island in the 10th Book of the Odyssey. There will be found throughout the masque more of real borrowing from Homer's picture of the experience of Ulysses and his companions on Circe's Island than from the Extravaganza of Puteanus. Thus, to give but one instance, the magical root *Hæmony*, by whose powers, explained to the two Brothers by the Attendant Spirit (lines 617—656), they are enabled to defy the spells of Comus and attempt the rescue of their sister, is an avowed adaptation of the divine herb *Moly* given by Hermes to Ulysses (Odyss. X. 286 *et seq.*) to enable him to withstand those drugs of Circe that had wrought such woe on his companions.

In the entire myth of Comus, as invented and developed by Milton for the purposes of his masque, one sees an act of poetic genius singularly characteristic of the author, singularly Miltonic. What are the apparent circumstances? A young man of five-and-twenty, known to be a poet, is asked to write a drama, to be performed, chiefly by the young members of an Earl's family, in a castle on the Welsh border, by way of entertainment to a gathering of gentlemen and ladies from the counties round. That is all. Well, he produces exactly what is wanted, a masque full of the required local colour and allusion, and with the incidents of the occasion woven in with the most graceful tact. He does more: he produces a real poem, a phantasy of delicious richness and daintiness interspersed with strains of the most exquisite lyric beauty. But he does more still. Phantasy of the purest poetic kind regnant undeniably through all, the hand of the artist and the lover of beauty perceptible in every scene and in every line, he yet contrives to make the whole a serene spiritual lesson, a construction to one moral, and that moral the deepest and most treasured idea of his own private philosophy. What is the myth as developed? It is the myth of *Comus*, the god of sensual Delirium, withstood in the thickest wood of his enchantments and wiles by the native power of maiden innocence, and visibly foiled and routed at last by the Guardian Spirit that has been sent down from Heaven for the protection of that innocence. Into an inculcation of this moral was the festivity at Ludlow Castle

lured or compelled. The Earl of Bridgewater's incipient Welsh Presidentship, the prepared stage, the scenery, the coloured lights, Lawes's music and managership, the sweet Lady Alice's acting and singing, the boyish elocution of the brothers, the cheering and clapping of hands among the spectators (many of whom, doubtless, were *Comus's* own disciples, trapped theatrically into momentary treason to him)—all these, by the skill of the resolute young Plato of Horton, were made to subserve a principle that had taken possession of himself. That sensual indulgence is intellectual and spiritual ruin; that the most essential outfit for a powerful and worthy life of any kind is fastidious scrupulosity of personal ethics; that the true root of real magnanimity, or the highest human degree of endeavour or attainment, is unsullied conscience, and such personal strictness as may be named even by the mystic name of virginity; that Virtue will always in the long run beat Vice even in this world, unless the whole frame of things is rottenness, God a delusion, and the world not worth living in, or dying in, or thinking about:—ransack all Milton's writings from the very earliest, and this will be found, in one form or another, the idea ever deepest with him, and most frequently recurring. It breaks out in prose passages, sometimes general, sometimes autobiographic; and it arrests one in his juvenile poems. And so here throughout *Comus* it is inculcated at length, softly and poetically, but yet unmistakeably. The entire myth of the Revel-god, and his home in one enchanted British wood, and the adventures of the sweet Lady in that wood, is an invention in its interest. And so with the express discourses into which the dialogue runs. We may refer to such passages as those at lines 210—220, 373—385, 420—475, 586—599, and 780—799. These are not to be regarded as merely poetical rhapsodies; they express Milton's young belief. And indeed he ends the whole drama with a quiet lyrical reiteration of the same lesson. The stanza has been quoted once, but may be quoted again:—

"Mortals that would follow me,
Love Virtue! She alone is free:
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

Commentators have found traces in *Comus* of Milton's acquaintance with two other writings besides the *Somnium* of Erycius Puteanus and Ben Jonson's masque of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue:* viz. George Peele's comedy of *The Old Wives' Tale* (1595) and Fletcher's pastoral of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, originally produced before 1625, and revived as a Court play and acted in the London theatres in 1633-4. In neither of these pieces is COMUS a character; but in the first there is a story of two brothers wandering in search of their lost sister and releasing her from the spell of an Enchanter, and in both there are passages in which one may descry or fancy some slight resemblance to some in *Comus*. Any recognition of these that may be necessary may be left for the Notes; and it will be a fitter close of this Introduction to sketch the subsequent fortunes of some of those who were concerned with the masque at its original production in 1634.

Omitting the musician Henry Lawes, about whom we shall have to give farther information in the Introduction to one of Milton's Sonnets (Sonnet XIII.), we have to take account here of these five persons—the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater, and their children, Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, the two Brothers, and Lady Alice Egerton, the Lady of the masque:—

(1) *The Earl and Countess of Bridgewater.*—The Countess did not long survive the induction to the Welsh Presidency. She died March 1635-6, in her fifty-third year, about a year before her mother, the aged Countess-Dowager of Derby, heroine of the *Arcades*. She was buried in the church of Little Gaddesden in Hertfordshire, where the inscription on her tomb certified, and perhaps still certifies, that she was "unparalleled in the gifts of "nature and grace, being strong of constitution, admirable for "beauty, generous in carriage, of a sweet and noble disposition, "wise in her affairs, cheerful in her discourse, liberal to the poor, "pious towards God, and good to all." Her husband, the widowed Earl, lived fourteen years longer, performing during a portion of this time the duties of his Welsh Presidency and his Privy Councillorship to Charles, but latterly involved, like other nobles, in the troubles of the Civil War, and reduced by these troubles to greater straits than most. Though he was loyal to

Charles, we find him acting no conspicuous part; sorely pinched for a time by the demands made upon him by the King for money, and pleading his poverty; and at length ousted from his Presidency and leading an invalid life of retirement, sometimes at Ashridge, but chiefly in his London house in the Barbican. His solace was in his books and in the society of his children. Of these, at the time of their mother's death, seven were married daughters, in houses of their own, who could be with him but occasionally; but the three youngest—Lady Alice, Viscount Brackley, and Mr. Thomas Egerton—were still but children. In 1640, however, Viscount Brackley, when only in his nineteenth year, married a bride still younger than himself: the lovely Elizabeth Cavendish, daughter of the famous Royalist Earl, afterwards Marquis and Duke, of Newcastle. The birth of a son to this young pair in 1642 was the occasion, as Todd found from a MS. still extant in the Bridgewater Library, of "A Hymeneal Song, or a Celebration of the Nuptials of the Right Honble. John Lord Brackley and his virtuous Lady, after the birth of their first son, performed by the Lady Alice Egerton, his Lordship's sister, and Henry Lawes, an humble servant to that Honble. Family." The dramatic and musical instincts of the family, one sees, were deep and persistent. After Viscount Brackley's marriage, only Lady Alice and Mr. Thomas Egerton continued to reside habitually with the Earl. He lived to see the execution of Charles I., died Dec. 4, 1649, aged about seventy, and was buried beside his wife in Little Gaddesden church. The inscription on his tombstone certified that "he was of incomparable "parts, both natural and acquired, so that both nature and art did "seem to strive which should contribute most towards making "him a most accomplished gentleman: he had an active body "and a vigorous soul; his deportment was graceful; his discourse "excellent, whether extemporary or premeditate, serious or "jocular, so that he seldom spake but he did either instruct or "delight those that heard him; he was a profound scholar, an "able statesman, and a good Christian." These are sepulchral superlatives; but many interesting books, still to be seen in the Bridgewater Library or elsewhere, with the Earl's careful signature upon them, attest his scholarly tastes and habits.

(2) *The Two Brothers.*—Without interpreting too literally the complimentary description of the two boys, young Viscount Brackley and his brother Mr. Thomas Egerton, we may suppose that in their masque dress they were handsome and graceful boys :—

> "I saw them under a green mantling vine
> That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
> Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots.
> Their port was more than human, as they stood:
> I took it for a faery vision
> Of some gay creatures of the element,
> That in the colours of the rainbow live
> And play i' the plighted clouds."

Portraits of somewhat later date, which still exist, are said to exhibit them as dark-haired, intelligent youths, such as we should fancy the two boys of the masque grown a little older. The countenance of the younger is described by Todd, from his portrait, as "very engaging" and "full of remarkable expression." This youth, however, did not live to manhood. He died in his father's lifetime, in his twenty-third year and unmarried, leaving the perpetuation of the family in the male line to the only remaining son, Viscount Brackley. This nobleman, the Elder Brother in *Comus*, succeeding his father in 1649, when he was about twenty-seven years of age, became known as the 2nd Earl of Bridgewater. Through the period of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, he appears to have lived on quietly, much as his father had done, amid books and literary relaxations, in the family town-house in Barbican or the country-seat at Ashridge. That he was, all the while, a Royalist and a hater of the Revolutionary Government is proved, among other evidences, by one which ought to be singularly interesting to us here. There had come down in his possession, with other books of his father's, the MS. of that original stage-copy of *Comus* which had probably been made by Lawes for the use of the family at the performance at Ludlow in 1634. This MS. was probably valued by the Earl, and, with Lawes's printed edition of 1637, dedicated to himself, may have been looked at occasionally by him with recollections of his boyish part in the masque. At all events, it bears, in his hand, at the bottom of the title-page, the words "*Author Jo.*

Milton." But at least one other writing of Milton's came into the Earl's hands, which excited very different feelings and may even have reflected disgust on the innocent masque itself. This was a copy of Milton's *Defensio Prima pro Populo Anglicano contra Salmasium*, or First Defence of the Regicide and Commonwealth Government, published in 1651. "*Liber igne, Author furcâ, dignissimi*" ("Book most worthy of the fire, Author of the gallows") are the emphatic words yet to be seen in the Earl's own hand on the title-page of his copy of that work! The strength of the Earl's Royalism, of which this is an instance, may have been partly owing to his marriage with the daughter of the splendid Royalist, and exile for his Royalism, the Marquis of Newcastle. Between the Earl and his Countess, at all events, there was an attachment singularly strong and constant, which is yet one of the traditions of the family of the Egertons. At length, with the Restoration, days of greater publicity and prosperity dawned on the Earl and his wife, as on other Royalist houses. He entered on public life in the Court and Parliament of Charles II., and was chosen, in May 1663, High Steward of the University of Oxford. In that year, however, there befell him the greatest calamity of his life. His Countess died in childbirth, June 14, at the age of thirty-seven, leaving papers of pious meditations on the Bible, which are yet preserved, and six children, surviving out of nine whom she had borne in all. With these children, styled, on her tombstone, "the living pictures of their deceased mother, and the only remaining comforts of their disconsolate father," the Earl lived on for three-and-twenty years longer, filling various public offices, besides that of Privy Councillor, under Charles II. and James II., and acting in his place in the House of Lords. He died in 1686, and was buried, beside his wife, at Little Gaddesden, where, by his own desire, this was the memorial on his monument: "That, having in the 19th year of his age, married "the Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, daughter to the then Earl, since "Marquis, and after that Duke, of Newcastle, he did enjoy, almost "22 years, all the happiness that a man could receive in the "sweet society of the best of wives, till it pleased God, in the "41st year of his age, to change his great felicity into as great "misery, by depriving him of his truly loving and entirely beloved

"wife, who was all his worldly bliss; after which time, humbly "submitting to, and waiting on, the will and pleasure of the "Almighty, he did sorrowfully wear out 23 years, 4 months, and "12 days, and then, on the 16th of October, in the year of our "Lord 1686, and in the 64th year of his own age, yielded up his "soul unto the merciful hand of God who gave it. Job xiii. 15: "*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*" Collins, from whose *Peerage* (edit. 1779) this and the other sepulchral records of the family are taken, adds the following account of the Earl, given by Sir Henry Chauncey, who knew him well, in his History of the County of Hertford: "He was a person of middling stature, "somewhat corpulent, with black hair, a round visage, a modest "and grave aspect, a sweet and pleasant countenance, and a "comely presence. He was a learned man, delighted much in "his library, and allowed free access to all who had any concerns "with him. His piety, devotion in all acts of religion, and firm-"ness to the Established Church of England, were very exem-"plary and he had all other accomplishments of virtue and "goodness." He was succeeded by his eldest son, John, as 3rd Earl of Bridgewater.[1]

(3) *The Lady Alice.* The beauty of the sweet young girl who acted the part of the lost Lady in the masque is sufficiently implied; but her exquisite singing is most dwelt on. Thus, of her *Echo-Song* in the enchanted wood :—

> "At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
> Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
> And stole upon the air, that even Silence
> Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
> Deny her nature, and be never more,
> Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
> And took in strains that might create a soul
> Under the ribs of Death."

[1] The Earldom of Bridgewater, after having been held by this John, the 3rd Earl, till 1701, came to *his* son, Scroop, as 4th Earl; who, in 1720, was created Duke of Bridgewater and Marquis of Brackley. On his death in 1745 the Dukedom descended to his son, John; who was succeeded, in 1748, by his brother, Francis, the Duke of Bridgewater so celebrated for his enterprise in canals and his patronage of Brindley. On his death, without

More than one portrait of this sweet Lady Alice Egerton are yet in existence. One, which was to be seen in the National Portrait Exhibition of 1866—numbered 753 in that collection—represented her as a young girl, in a white dress and blue scarf, very pretty, and with very fair, almost lint-white, hair. She remained unmarried later than any of her sisters, residing with her father, in his house in the Barbican or at Ashridge, while he lived, and witnessing, as we have seen, while still in her youth, the early marriage of her brother Lord Brackley, and the death of her younger brother. In or about 1653, four years after her father's death and the accession of her only surviving brother to the Earldom, and when she was about thirty-three years of age, she married Richard Vaughan, 2nd Earl of Carbery in the Irish Peerage, and created also (1643) Baron Vaughan of Emlyn in the English Peerage, a nobleman considerably older than herself, who had been conspicuous for his Royalism in the Civil War, had been twice married before, and had thirteen children by these previous marriages. It was in 1653, shortly after this marriage, that Lawes dedicated to her, in conjunction with the elder sister, Mary, Lady Herbert of Cherbury, his musical "Ayres and Dialogues" (see *antè*, p. 220); and there is evidence that these two ladies continued to show much kindness to Lawes. The Earl of Carbery himself was known as a patron of struggling merit.

issue, in 1803, the Dukedom became extinct; but the Earldom was continued in another branch of the Egerton family, descended from the fifth son of the 3rd Earl. It also became extinct in the Rev. Francis Henry, the 8th Earl, who died in 1829, and is remembered as the eccentric founder of the *Bridgewater Treatises*. The name of Egerton was assumed, by royal warrant, in 1833, by Lord Francis Leveson Gower, youngest son of the 1st Duke of Sutherland, and already, by bequest from his relative the last Duke of Bridgewater (whose sister, Lady Louisa Egerton, had been 1st Marchioness of Stafford and mother of the 1st Duke of Sutherland), possessor of much of the Bridgewater property; and in 1846 this Lord Francis Gower was raised to the peerage as Earl of Ellesmere and Viscount Brackley. The new line of Earls of Ellesmere thus created are the present representatives of the old Egerton family and inheritors of its memorials, including Bridgewater House and its library. Old Bridgewater House in the Barbican was burnt down in 1687; some time after which the family town-residence was transferred to Cleveland House, St. James's, with its name changed to Bridgewater House. On this site the present edifice of the name was built, in 1847-50, by the 1st Earl of Ellesmere.

It was on his estate of the Golden Grove in Caermarthenshire that Jeremy Taylor had found shelter after the ruin of the Royalist cause in the Civil War, supporting himself by keeping a school; and here, during a residence of some years, that famous divine had written some of his works, including the manual of Devotions to which he gave the name *The Golden Grove*, and to which, when it was published in 1656, there was a frontispiece by Hollar representing the Earl of Carbery's house and the surrounding scenery (Wood's Ath. III. 783—785). This retirement of Jeremy Taylor's on the Earl of Carbery's estate was before the Earl's third marriage with the Lady Alice Egerton; but Taylor's continued intimacy with the family is attested by the dedication of many of his writings to the Earl after his third marriage. The Earl surviving the Restoration, and having his estates chiefly in Wales, the reward to which he was entitled for his long-proved Royalty took the form of his appointment to the revived office of the Welsh Presidency, in abeyance since it had been held by the first Earl of Bridgewater. Thus, by a romantic chance, the Countess of Carbery re-entered Ludlow Castle, and graced once more, as mistress of the Castle, the very hall in which, twenty-six years before, she had performed in *Comus* as a girl before her father and mother and their guests. The secretary for some time to her husband in his Presidency, and the acting steward of Ludlow Castle under him through the years 1661 and 1662, was no other than Samuel Butler, then verging on fifty years of age; and the tradition is that part of the first portion of Butler's *Hudibras*, published in 1663, was written in a little room in the entrance gateway to the Castle, close to the Hall of *Comus*. Butler must, therefore, have known the Lady of Milton's masque. A Song addressed to her by her husband some time after their marriage was printed in 1669 in Lawes's posthumous *Select Ayres and Dialogues to sing to the Theorbo-lute or Bass-Viol*; and, among the *Poems by Mrs. Katherine Philips, "The Matchless Orinda,"* published in 1667 (after a surreptitious edition in 1664), is one "To the Right Honourable Alice, Countess of Carbery, on her enriching Wales with her Presence." Her husband died in 1687; the date of her own death I have not found.

LYCIDAS.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; prior printed copy in a volume of Cambridge Memorial Poems 1638; and original Draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

On the 9th of June, 1626, when Milton had been for about sixteen months a student at Christ's College, Cambridge, there were admitted into that college, as appears from its records, two brothers, named King, sons of Sir John King, Knight, then living in Dublin, as Privy Councillor for Ireland and Secretary to the Irish Government. The family was English; but various members of it, in addition to Sir John, held offices in Ireland. Edward King, for example, Sir John's brother, was bishop of the Irish see of Elphin. Both the young men had been born in Ireland—the elder, named Roger, near Dublin; and the younger, named Edward after his uncle, at Boyle in Connaught. At the date of their admission into Christ's College, Roger was sixteen years of age, and Edward fourteen. They had previously been pupils of Mr. Thomas Farnaby, one of the most noted schoolmasters of the time, whose school then was in Goldsmith's Rents, Cripplegate, London. The tutor under whose care they were put at Christ's College was Mr. William Chappell, who was also Milton's first tutor there, and who became afterwards Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and Dean of Cashel, and finally a bishop in the Irish Church.

Edward King, the younger of the two brothers, seems to have been one of the most popular young men in Christ's College during Milton's residence there. He and Milton must have seen much of each other. They must have had frequent meetings in hall, at lecture, and in each other's rooms, and frequent walks about Cambridge together. Milton, as we know, was indubitably the chief ornament of the little community, its ablest and noblest youth, supreme in everything; and, before he left college as M.A. in July 1632, aged twenty-three, this had come to be recognised. But, among those who had been his fellow-students in college, and whom he left behind him there, there were several of whom high things were expected. John Cleveland, afterwards known as

a metrical satirist, was one; and the future celebrated "Platonist," Henry More, who had joined the college just as Milton was about to leave it, was another. Probably, however, no one was more liked in the college, both by dons and by students, than Edward King. Indeed, before Milton left the college, King, by what looks now like a promotion over Milton's head, had become himself one of the dons. On June 10, 1630, the following royal mandate was addressed to the Master and Fellows of Christ's College: "Charles R.—Trusty and Well-beloved, We greet you "well.—Whereas We are given to understand that the Fellowship "of Mr. Andrew Sandelands of your college is shortly to be "made void, and being well ascertained both of the present "sufficiency and future hopes of a young scholar, Edward King, "now B.A., We, out of Our princely care that those hopeful "parts in him may receive cherishing and encouragement, are "graciously pleased so far to express Our royal intention towards "him as hereby to will and require you that, when the same "Fellowship shall become void, you do presently admit the said "Edward King into the same, notwithstanding any statute, "ordinance, or constitution to the contrary." Had such college honours then gone by merit, Milton, then a B.A. of two years' standing, would have had a far superior claim. As it was, however, King, though his junior by three years, and only just out of his undergraduateship, received the Fellowship, and thus took nominal precedence of Milton during Milton's last two years at Christ's. The royal mandate in King's favour was clearly owing to his family connexions and influence; but to so popular a young scholar the preferment does not appear to have been grudged. Not only was he a favourite on account of his amiable character; he really was, as the royal mandate represented him, a youth of "hopeful parts." This we learn, however, rather from tradition than from any specimens of his ability that have come down to us. The earliest of such specimens that I have found are in a volume put forth by the Cambridge University press late in 1631 under the title of *Genethliacum Illustrissimorum principum, Caroli et Mariæ, a Musis Cantabrigiensibus celebratum.* It consists of complimentary Latin pieces by some scores of Cambridge men, of different colleges, on the recent birth of the Princess Mary, the

third child of Charles I., but with retrospective reference to the birth in the previous year (May 29, 1630) of the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles II. Among the contributors is Edward King, Fellow of Christ's College. He contributes four short Latin pieces—one in hexameters, one in Horatian verse, and two in elegiacs. They are not very poetical or elegant, and indeed are rather prosaic. But in such customary verses of compliment to Royalty one had not much scope; and King had probably written better things, in Latin and in English, known to his fellow-collegians in Christ's, and to Milton among them. When Milton left the college, there seems to have been no one in it for whom he had a higher regard, morally at least, than Edward King.

Five years had elapsed since then, during which Milton, living chiefly at his father's country place, at Horton in Buckinghamshire, some sixty miles from Cambridge, can have seen King but occasionally. He would still hear, however, of King's progress and continued popularity in his Fellowship. In July 1633, we find, King took his full degree of M.A.; and there are subsequent traces of him in the records of the college, while he was qualifying himself for the Church—the profession for which Milton also had been originally destined, but which he had abandoned. He was tutor in the college, as well as Fellow; and in 1634-5 he was "prælector," and the admissions into the college for that year are still to be seen in his handwriting in the college-books. At least six more specimens of his Latin versification have been discovered, belonging to this period. There is a copy of Latin Iambics by him in a volume of Cambridge University verses on the King's recovery from small-pox (1633); he furnished another copy of Latin Iambics to a similar collection of academic congratulations on the King's return from his coronation-visit to Scotland (July 1633); there are some commendatory Latin Iambics of King's prefixed to *Senile Odium*, a Latin play by Peter Hausted, M.A. of Queen's College, acted at Cambridge in 1631, but not published till 1633; he has a set of Latin elegiacs in a Cambridge collection of verses on the birth of the Duke of York (Oct. 1633); he has some Horatian stanzas in a similar volume on the birth of the Princess Elizabeth (Dec. 1635); and the latest thing of his I

have seen is a copy of Latin Iambics in a collection of pieces, by no fewer than 140 Cambridge scholars, put forth on the birth of the Princess Anne (March 1636-7). Milton's hand does not appear in any of these collections, verses eulogistic of Royalty not being in his way; but he may have seen some of the collections, and read King's contributions to them. He cannot, I am pretty sure, have thought much of them, any more than of their predecessors in the volume of 1631. But, as I have said, he liked King personally, and probably knew him to be capable of better things.

Suddenly, however, this youth of golden opinions from all sorts of people, this young hope of Christ's College, was cut off. It was the Long Vacation of 1637, and he had arranged to visit his friends in Ireland. Proceeding by way of the English midland and western counties, and perhaps seeing friends in those parts, he took a passage on board a vessel sailing from Chester Bay for Dublin. The vessel had gone but a little way, was still on the Welsh coast, and not out into the open channel, when, on the 10th of August, in perfectly calm weather, she struck on a rock, not far from land, and foundered. Some seem to have escaped in a boat; but most went down with the ship, and among them Edward King. His body was never recovered.

The news caused a profound sensation among all King's friends. As it was the time of the University vacation, when his college-fellows were scattered, it must have reached them separately, and some of them circuitously. Milton, we are to fancy, heard it at Horton, late in August 1637, or in the course of the following month. It had already been a sad year in the Horton household. The Plague, which had broken out in 1636, and whose ravages in various parts of England, and especially in London, were very alarming in 1637, had caused an unusual number of deaths in the neighbourhood of Horton. In the same unhealthy season, though not by the Plague itself, Milton's mother had died. She was buried, on the 6th of April, in Horton parish church, where the inscription "*Heare lyeth the Body of Sara Milton, the wife of John Milton, who died the 3rd of April* 1637" may be read to this day on a plain blue stone on the floor of the chancel. Milton was still walking about Horton with this loss in his mind, and the

blue stone, with its inscription, may have just been put down over the grave, when there came the news of the shipwreck in the Irish seas and of the drowning of Edward King with the rest.

When the Cambridge colleges reassembled in Oct. 1637 after the Long Vacation, the melancholy death of poor King of Christ's was one of the first subjects of talk. It was proposed by somebody, or it suggested itself to more than one at once, that a volume of Memorial Verses should be prepared in his honour and published from the University press. Among the contributors to this volume were to be, of course, some of King's more immediate associates of Christ's College, from whom he had parted so lately on his fatal journey; but friends of his in other colleges, and relatives and former acquaintances out of Cambridge, might be expected to co-operate. Either Milton was thought of and applied to, or he had heard of the project and volunteered his assistance. In November 1637, as appears from a dating at the head of the original draft of *Lycidas* in Milton's own hand among the Milton MSS. at Cambridge, he wrote that poem, entitling it simply "LYCIDAS." This was to be his contribution to the intended memorial volume.

The volume, probably because other contributors were not so ready as Milton, did not appear till some time in 1638. It consisted of two collections of pieces, printed by the University printers, Thomas Buck and Roger Daniel, and separately paged, so that they might be bound either separately or together. The one was a collection of twenty-three Latin and Greek pieces occupying 35 pages of small quarto, and entitled "*Justa Edovardo King naufrago ab amicis mœrentibus, amoris et μνείας χάριν*" ("Rites to Edward King, drowned by shipwreck, in love and remembrance by his sorrowing friends"); the other consisted of thirteen pieces of English verse, occupying 25 pages of the same size, and with this title, bordered with black, on the front page, "*Obsequies to the memorie of Mr. Edward King, Anno Dom.* 1638." Prefixed to the Latin and Greek collection is a Latin paragraph, in one long and very involved sentence, of which, on account of the particulars contained in it, we give a translation, as follows:—

"P.M.S.—Edward King (son of John, Knight, and Privy Coun-

"cillor for the Kingdom of Ireland to their majesties, Elizabeth, "James, and Charles), Fellow of Christ's College in the University "of Cambridge, happy in the consciousness and in the fame of "piety and erudition, and one in whom there was nothing imma-"ture except his age, was on a voyage to Ireland, drawn by "natural affection to visit his native country, his relatives and "his friends,—chiefly, his brother, Sir Robert King, Knight, a "most distinguished man; his sisters, most excellent women, "Anne, wife of Lord G. Caulfield, Baron Charlemont, and "Margaret, wife of Lord G. Loder, Chief Justice of Ireland; the "venerable prelate Edward King, Bishop of Elphin, his god-"father; and the most reverend and learned William Chappell, "Dean of Cashel and Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, whose "hearer and pupil he had been in the University,—when, the "ship in which he was having struck on a rock, not far from "the British coast, and being stove in by the shock, he, "while the other passengers were fruitlessly busy about their "mortal lives, having fallen on his knees, and breathing a "life which was immortal, in the act of prayer going down "with the vessel, rendered up his soul to God, Aug. 10, 1637, "aged 25."

The following were the contributors to the Latin and Greek collection, in the order of their pieces as they are printed:— Anon.; N. Felton; R. Mason, of Jesus College; J. Pullen; William Iveson, B.A. of Christ's (Greek); John Pearson, of King's; R. Brown; J. B.; John Pots, of Christ's (Greek); Charles Mason, of King's; — Coke; Stephen Anstie; John Hoper; R. C.; Henry More, of Christ's (Greek); Thomas Farnaby, the former schoolmaster of the deceased; Henry King, one of the brothers of the deceased; J. Hayward, Chancellor and Canon-Residentiary of Lichfield Cathedral; Michael Honeywood, Fellow of Christ's (two pieces); William Brierley, Fellow of Christ's; Christopher Bainbrigge, Fellow of Christ's; and R. Widdrington, of Christ's. The contributors to the English collection, also in the order of their pieces, are these thirteen—Henry King, the deceased's brother, again; Joseph Beaumont, Fellow of Peterhouse, afterwards more known; Anon.; John Cleveland, of Christ's, afterwards known as poet and satirist; William More;

W. Hall; Samson Briggs, M.A., Fellow of King's; Isaac Olivier; J. H. (J. Hayward, the Lichfield Canon, again, who addresses his lines to the deceased's sister, the Lady Margaret Loder); C. B. (perhaps Christopher Bainbrigge again); R. Brown, again; T. Norton of Christ's; and "J. M." This last is Milton, who signs with his initials only. The last piece in the collection, in fact, and much the longest—for it spreads over six pages (pp. 20—25), while only one of the others extends over more than two—is Milton's *Lycidas.* It begins on the same page on which Norton's piece ends, and without any title, or other formal separation from the pieces that precede it. All the more striking must it have been for a reader who had toiled through the trash of the preceding twelve pieces (I have read them one and all, and will vouch that they *are* trash) to come at length upon this opening of a true poem:—

"Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year:
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due,
For Lycidas is dead."

This poem of Milton's, published half-anonymously in 1638 in the Cambridge volume of Memorial Verses to Edward King, was in circulation just as Milton was going abroad on his Italian journey. It, and his *Comus*, printed for him quite anonymously in the previous year by his friend Henry Lawes, the musician, were all but the only poems of Milton in print till 1645, when the first edition of his collected Poems was given to the world by Moseley. In that edition, and in the subsequent edition of 1673, *Lycidas* is printed with its present complete title, thus: "LYCIDAS. *In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drown'd in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas,* 1637. *And by occasion foretells the ruine of our corrupted Clergie then in their height.*" A portion of this extended title (from "In this Monody" to the date "1637") appears in the original MS. draft of the poem at Cambridge, inserted, clearly by way of afterthought, in

Milton's own hand under the heading LYCIDAS; the words "Novemb. 1637," which had originally accompanied that heading, being then erased as superfluous.

The poem is a Pastoral. It is the most pastoral in form of all Milton's English poems, more so considerably than the *Arcades* and *Comus.* It is not a direct lyric of lamentation by Milton for the death of King; it is a phantasy of one shepherd mourning, in the time of autumn, the death of a fellow-shepherd. The mourning shepherd, however, is Milton himself, and the shepherd mourned for is King; and, through the guise of all the pastoral circumstance and imagery of the poem, there is a studious representation of the real facts of King's brief life and his accidental death, and of Milton's regard for him and academic intimacy with him,

> "Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
> Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
> We drove a-field, and both together heard
> What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
> Battening our flocks."

Here is the recollection, pastorally expressed, of their companionship at Cambridge, their walks and talks together there, and their common exercises. In the same manner it has already been hinted to us that among those common exercises was poetry. One reason why Lycidas was now lamented in song was that he himself had known how "to sing and build the lofty rhyme." All the more inexplicable was his loss. Where had the Nymphs been when this loved votary of theirs was drowned? Not, certainly, anywhere near the scene of the disaster. Not on the steeps known to the old Bards and Druids (the mountains of North Wales), nor on the shaggy top of Mona (the Isle of Anglesey), nor by the wizard stream of the Deva (the river Dee and Chester Bay). The topographical exactness here, under the poetic language, is worthy of remark, and is one of Milton's habits. But, had the Nymphs been there, what could they have done? Had the Muse herself been able to save her son Orpheus? Dwelling a little on this thought, of the non-immunity of even the finest intellectual promise from the stroke of death, Milton works it into one of the

most beautiful, and most frequently quoted passages of the poem, "Alas, what boots it," &c. (lines 64–84). That strain, he says, at the end of the passage, had been "of a higher mood," rather beyond the range of the pastoral; but now he will resume his simple oaten pipe and proceed. There pass then across the visionary stage three figures in succession. First comes the Herald of the Sea, Triton, who reports, in mythological terms, which yet veil exact information, that the cause of King's death was not tempestuous weather, for the sea was as calm as glass when the ship went down, but either the unseaworthiness of the ship itself or some inherited curse in her very timbers. Next comes Camus, the local deity of the Cam, footing slowly like his own sluggish stream, and with his bonnet of sedge from its banks, staying not long, but uttering one ejaculation over the loss to Cambridge of one of her darling sons. Lastly, in still more mystic and awful guise, comes St. Peter, the guardian of that Church of Christ for the service of which King had been destined—the apostle to whom the Great Shepherd himself had given it in charge "Feed my sheep." Not out of place even his grave figure in this peculiar pastoral. For has he not lost one of his truest under-shepherds, lost him too at a time when he could ill be spared, when false shepherds, hireling shepherds, knowing nothing of the real craft they professed, were more numerous than ever, and the flocks were perishing for lack of care or by the ravages of the stealthy wolf? It is to the singularly bold and stern passage of denunciation here put into St. Peter's mouth (lines 113–131), and especially to the last lines of the passage, prophesying speedy vengeance and reform, that Milton referred, when, in the title prefixed to the poem on its republication in 1645, he intimated that it contained a description of the state of England at the time when it was written, and foretold the ruin of the corrupted English clergy then in their height. In 1638 it had been bold enough to let the passage stand in the poem, as published in the Cambridge memorial volume, without calling attention to it in the title. But, indeed, this passage too had transcended the ordinary limits of the quiet pastoral. The poet is aware of this. Accordingly, when "the dread voice is past" that had so pealed over the landscape and caused it to shudder, he calls on Alphëus and the Sicilian

Muse, as the patrons of the pastoral proper, to return, and be witl him through the pensive remainder. Beautifully pensive it is and yet with a tendency to soar. First, in strange and evidentl studied contrast with the stern speech of St. Peter which has jus preceded, is the exquisitely worded passage which follows (line 143-151). For musical sweetness, and dainty richness of flora colour, it beats perhaps anything else in all Milton. It is th call upon all valleys of the landscape, and the banks of al the secret streamlets, to yield up their choicest flowers, and thos dearest to shepherds, that they may be strewn over the dead bod of Lycidas. Ah ! it is but a fond fancy, a momentary forgetful ness. For where, meanwhile, is that dead body? Not anywher on land at all, to be strewed with flowers and receive a funeral but whelmed amid the sounding seas, either sunk deep down nea the spot of the shipwreck, or drifted thence northwards perhap to the Hebrides, or perhaps southwards to Cornwall and St Michael's Mount. But let the surviving shepherds cease thei mourning. Though that body is never again to be seen on earth Lycidas is not lost. A higher world has received him already; an there, amid other groves and other streams, laving his oozy lock with the nectar of heaven, and listening to the nuptial song, h has joined the society of the Saints, and can look down on th world and the friends he has left, and act as a power promoted fo their good.——Here the Monody or Pastoral ends. The last eigh lines of the poem do not belong to the Monody. They are not a part of the song sung by Milton in his imaginary character as th shepherd who is bewailing the death of Lycidas, but are distinctl a stanza of Epilogue, in which Milton speaks directly, criticise what he has just written in his imaginary character, and intimate that he has stepped out of that character, and is about to tur to other occupations :—

"Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still Morn went out with sandals grey;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;
And now the Sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay:
At last he rose and twitched his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

Perhaps there is not in the whole of English critical literature a more amazing piece of criticism than that of Dr. Johnson on *Lycidas* in his Life of Milton. "It is not to be considered as the "effusion of real passion," wrote the sturdy man, "for passion "runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion "plucks no berries from the myrtle and the ivy, nor calls upon "Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of 'rough satyrs,' and 'fauns "with cloven heel.' Where there is leisure for fiction, there is "little grief. . . In this poem there is no nature, for there is "nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and "therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are long ago "exhausted, and its inherent improbability always forces dissatis-"faction on the mind. . . We know that they never drove "a-field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and, though it be "allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true "meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, "because it cannot be known when it is found. . . Surely no "man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure had "he not known its author."

Were readers horses, one is tempted to ask, when this criticism was written? That there should have been a time in the English world of letters when the dictator of that world could put it forth, and have it accepted, suggests strange thoughts respecting the changes that may take place from age to age in the very fibre of men's minds, and their notions of Art and Poesy. Not so much because the criticism can have the intended effect now, even though it is Dr. Johnson's, as because it suggests an additional remark or two on *Lycidas* in particular, and on the nature of Poetry generally, we give the heads of a reply:—(1) It is a sheer assumption that Milton offered the poem as an utterance of passion, or intense personal grief. We have indicated, as faithfully as possible, from the records, the degree of Milton's intimacy with Edward King, and of his probable affection for him, while King was yet living. The intimacy and the affection were considerable, but less perhaps than what bound Milton to other friends of his youth, of whom he has left no similar commemoration. They were certainly less than the intimacy and affection that bound him to one other friend of his youth, of whom he *has*

left various commemorations. The bosom-friend of Milton's youth, his very friend of friends from his boyhood to the time of his Italian journey, was that Charles Diodati to whom are addressed two of his Latin Familiar Epistles, the First and Sixth of his Latin Elegies, and one Italian Sonnet, and whose death, as premature as King's, and but one year later, gave occasion to perhaps the most remarkable of all Milton's Latin poems, his *Epitaphium Damonis*. Only the accident that these pieces to and about Diodati are in Latin and Italian has prevented the fact of Milton's paramount friendship with him from being generally known, and has led to the idea that the unique friend of Milton's youth was Edward King of Christ's. The death of that young scholar, so melancholy in its mode, did indeed move Milton, as it must have moved many. Here was one fine young life cut short, recklessly cut short, when thousands of coarser lives were spared, and England and the Church of England had need that the best only should be prolonged. The recollection of his face and voice, and of hours spent in his society, would return at the news, and would mingle with the keen imagination of the last scene, when one meek praying figure was marked on the deck of the sinking ship, resigned amid the shrieks, the mad hurry, and the gurgling waters. What more natural than that Milton should throw his feelings on the event, and the whole train of thought which it suggested, into artistic form in a memorial poem? This is precisely what *Lycidas* is. It is the same kind of tribute from a poet to the memory of a friend as a bust, with pedestal and bas-reliefs, would have been from a sculptor, or some thoughtful picture, of a few figures with fit landscape or sea-view, would have been from a painter. Personal feeling is present; but it blends with, and passes into, the feeling of the artist thinking of his subject. (2) Johnson's criticism would abolish, by implication, all Poetry whatsoever. In that crude sense of what is "natural" which his criticism begs, all poetry is unnatural. No poem, even of passion, can possibly be "natural" in the sense of being a record of the exact mental procedure consentaneous with, or appropriate to, the immediate moment of the passion. If passion "runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions," if passion "plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon

Arethuse and Mincius," neither does passion perform such simple acts of literary Art as the construction of clear sentences, the formation of lines of metre, or the invention of rhymes. Grief, in its first act, in poets as in other people, consumes itself in "Ohs" and "Ahs," in sobs and agitated gestures, in dull numbed musings, incoherent verbal bursts, pacings of the chamber through the weary night. To poets, however, as soon as there is a lull of comparative tranquillity, and aiding perhaps to bring on that lull, there comes the use of those artifices of expression which are with them hardly artifices any longer, but the very habits of their souls. Then is produced the lay of the occasion, the song or longer poem, recording the grief indeed, and even renewing and deepening it, but weaving into the grief all the beauty of cognate story and meditation that it will bear. True, there will still be gradations of apparent closeness to the primary moment or remoteness from it, according either to the intensity of the original grief or to the poet's acquired habits of artistic working. Simplest of all, least remove of all from the original moment of feeling, and therefore most likely to some poets, and most natural in seeming to most readers, will be the direct lyric of sorrow in a few passionate stanzas. Burns's *Highland Mary*, and other songs of his, are examples. But there may be memorial poems, tributes to a recent or past personal grief, which shall be as true and natural, and yet be of more extensive design and more complex texture. These may contain trains of varied thought and phantasy which the original feeling has originated, and therefore may claim as its own; they may be speculative and occult, or figurative and mythological, as the habits of the poet's thinking shall determine; even Mincius and Arethuse need not be absent, nor rough satyrs and fauns with cloven heel. Witness Shelley's *Adonais* to the memory of Keats. Or witness Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. What is that chief of Memorial Poems in the English tongue but an aggregation of lyrics in which, though one deep and enduring personal feeling moved to them all and pervades them all, "remote allusions and obscure opinions," beyond the learning of Johnson's time, are plentifully inwoven, snatches of story occur and recur, and all the science and metaphysics of the time become relevant to one death? Now, Milton's *Lycidas* is not, and does not profess to be,

a poem of such personal sorrow, by many degrees, as *In Memoriam.* Nay, as Edward King was not a Keats, it is, presumably, less a poem of personal sorrow than *Adonais.* All the more are the traces of deliberate and conscious art which are visible in it to be regarded as consistent with the poet's actual kind and amount of feeling when he wrote it, and his true intention. There *are* such traces. Twice in the body of the poem, as we have seen, Milton restrains or checks himself, as having passed somewhat the strict bounds of the strain in which he had begun; and at the close there is an Epilogue in his own name, characterizing the poem as a "Doric lay," in which "the tender stops of various quills" had been touched, and also hinting that the artist is moving on to other themes, which will require a different treatment. (3) One established, and indeed all-prevalent, artifice in the poetry of Milton's day was the artifice of the pastoral form, and Johnson's criticism exhibits an utter obtuseness to the real nature, meaning, and power of this artifice. "They never drove a-field and they had no flocks to batten"! No, nor did Theocritus or Virgil ever keep sheep, or pipe on oaten flutes beneath beech-trees. Nor did the Portuguese pastoral poets do the like, nor Sannazaro and the Italians. Nor was Spenser a real Colin Clout, with Sidney, and Raleigh, and Shakespeare, and all the other poets, or other eminent Englishmen of the day, surrounding him as actual shepherds, called Astrophel, and Cuddie, and Willie, and Thomalin! What then? We know what they meant. It is one thing to hold that the pastoral form might still suit our modern times, and to wish that it were preserved; it is another to understand what the form was in the hands of those who did practise it, and to see its importance in the past history of our literature. Spenser and the other pastoralists would have smiled in scorn at the notion that the pastoral should be an exhibition of real shepherd-life, of the thoughts and manners of real shepherds. With them the pastoral form was a device—just as metre and rhyme were devices, but in some respects of larger consequence—for distancing *themselves* from the ordinary and the prosaic, and enabling them to live and move mentally in a more poetic air. It was *themselves*, with all their experiences and acquired ideas and feelings, that they flung into an imaginary Arcadian world,

to be shepherds there, and, under the guise of that imaginary life, express their own real feelings, their most intimate experiences, and their thoughts about affairs, in monologue or dialogue. Defensible or not originally, desirable or not among ourselves, as we may think this artifice of pastoralism, this device for poets of an imaginary removal of themselves to an Arcadian land in order to think under Arcadian conditions, it is gross ignorance not to know how largely it once prevailed, and what a wealth of old poetry we owe to it. From the youth of Spenser, himself the pastoralist-in-chief, on through the lives of the next generation, or from 1580 to 1640, much of the finest English poetry is in the pastoral form. During that period the word "shepherd" was an accepted synonym in England for the word "poet." They all, the finest of them all, "drove a-field" together, and "battened their flocks" in verse, though they had no flocks to batten. Well, Milton, an admirer of Spenser, and describable as the truest of the Spenserians till he taught the world a higher than the Spenserian in the Miltonic, employed the pastoral form in his *Lycidas*, as he had employed it already, though less decidedly, in others of his poems. He threw the story of his acquaintance with Edward King and the sad death of that youth by drowning, and all the train of thought about the state of England which that death suggested, into the form of a pastoral lament for that shepherd by himself as a surviving shepherd. And who would wish now that he had done otherwise? What would a simple narrative of the shipwreck, or a few stanzas of direct regret, have been in comparison with the poem we now read? It is better than any memorial bust with bas-reliefs, better than any memorial picture. It tells the facts with the minutest fidelity, but it gives them in the setting of one long mood of Milton's mind as he mused over them. And it is this setting that has made the facts immortal. If we now remember Edward King of Christ's College at all, or know that there was ever such a youth in the world, is it not owing to Milton's Monody?

"The diction is harsh," says Johnson in addition, "the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing." This is worse and worse. The ear of the eighteenth century, one can see, if this is to be taken as the opinion of Johnson's contemporaries, must have been

vitiated in proportion to the degradation of its notion of Poesy. For fastidious beauty of diction, and musical finish of versification, *Lycidas* is hardly rivalled. The art of the verse is a stud in itself. The lines are mostly the common Iambics of five feet but every now and then there is an exquisitely managed variatio of a short line of three Iambi. Then the interlinking and intertwining of the rhymes, sometimes in pairs, sometimes in threes or even fives, and at all varieties of intervals, from that of th contiguous couplet to that of an unobserved chime or stanza o some length, are positive perfection. Occasionally in the poem too there is a line that does not rhyme; and in every such case, though the rhyme is never missed by the reader's ear, in so much music is the line bedded, yet a delicate artistic reason may be detected or fancied for its formal absence. The first line of al is one instance. We shall leave the reader to find out the others.

Sonnets and Kindred Pieces.

In one well-known Sonnet Wordsworth has given the very essence of the history of the Sonnet down to Milton's time :—

"Scorn not the Sonnet: Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours! With this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains,—alas! too few."

Milton, however, is notable in the succession of chief Sonnet-writers, not only on account of the intrinsic power of the few Sonnets he did write, but also because he helped, by means of them, to establish or re-establish in England that stricter mechanism of the Sonnet which had been in favour with the Italians.

The Sonnet may be defined, generally, as a little poem of

fourteen lines, complete in itself, and containing a condensed expression of some one thought or feeling. The Italian poets, however, who had first practised the Sonnet, and from whom the Spaniards, the French, and the English had taken it, had practised it in one particular form, or rather in a certain variety of forms. Not only were the fourteen lines rhyming lines, of the norm of five Iambi each, but the rhymes interlaced each other in a peculiar manner. According to Hallam (*Lit. of Europe*, edit. 1860, III. 265-6), quoting as his authority the Italian critic and historian of Poetry, Quadrio (1695—1756), the legitimate Italian Sonnet consisted of two quatrains and two tercets; *i.e.* it contained only four rhymes in all, the first two of them (A and B) repeated four times each, and dominating the first eight lines between them, and the other two (C and D) repeated thrice each and commanding the last six lines. Within this rule, however, there was room for variety. Thus, while the distribution of the two rhymes of the first eight lines was most frequently that of A in lines 1, 4, 5, and 8, and B in lines 2, 3, 6, and 7, there were instances of mere alternate distribution, *i.e.* of A in lines 1, 3, 5, and 7, and B in lines 2, 4, 6, and 8. In the last six lines the liberty of arrangement of the two rhymes was also considerable. Thus, while in many of Petrarch's sonnets the arrangement is the alternate one, or C 9, 11, 13, and D 10, 12, 14, I light upon one at this moment where it is C 9, 13, 14, and D 10, 11, 12, and upon two others where it is C 9, 11, 12, 14, and D 10, 13. This last arrangement, it will be observed, is a deviation from what Hallam specifies as the "legitimate" construction of the Sonnet, inasmuch as, though it does present only two rhymes in the last six lines, it does not present two tercets, or rhymes thrice repeated, but one of the rhymes doing duty four times and the other but twice. But it is hardly correct to say that the "legitimate" form of the Italian Sonnet required but two rhymes in the last six lines. Quite as frequent in Petrarch and other Italian poets are Sonnets with three rhymes in the last six lines, susceptible of sundry arrangements, as C 9, 12, D 10, 13, E 11, 14, or again C 9, 13, D 10, 12, E 11, 14. On the whole, the legitimate Italian Sonnet may be said to have contained either four rhymes or five rhymes altogether, of which two governed the first eight lines, and the

remaining two or three the last six, the linking of the rhymes within this general provision admitting of variety, though some arrangements were preferred to others. The worst and least common arrangement in the last six lines, according to Hallam, was that which ended the Sonnet in a rhyming couplet, so as to round it off with a kind of epigrammatic effect; and Quadrio, he says, entirely condemns this couplet termination. As Quadrio, however, condemned it on his own mere disliking, or at best because he found it rare, one is at liberty to rest on the fact that there are instances of it in the old Italian poets (we have cited one from Petrarch), and so to regard its occasional use as not only defensible on grounds of free taste, but also consistent with the Italian usage.

There is a paucity of rhymes in English as compared with Italian, and not only of the dissyllabic endings which formed the Italian rhymes, but even of the single rhymes that must pass for their substitutes. The first English Sonnet-writers, therefore, made pretty free with the Italian model. There was some effort indeed to keep more or less close to that model, and especially not to go beyond five rhymes in all in the building of the Sonnet. Instances will be found in Wyatt (1503—1542), and in Surrey (1515—1547). Surrey even has a Sonnet in which, by a freak, he makes two rhymes serve for the whole, and others in which he gets through with three. From the first, however, there was a tendency to the convenience of more numerous rhymes than the four or five allowed in Italian, and also, with or without that convenience, to the epigrammatic effect of an ending in a couplet. Surrey's Sonnets all end in rhyming couplets, and some of them have seven rhymes. Hence, at length, a laxness in the English idea of the Sonnet, which permitted any little poem of fourteen lines, rhymed anyhow, to be called by that name. Perhaps, however, two forms emerged from this confusion as normal or customary forms of the English Sonnet. One of these forms, largely exemplified in Spenser (1553 – 1599), is a form which finds five rhymes in all still sufficient, but does so by throwing the first twelve lines into three interlinked stanzas of four lines each, and then adding a couplet. The formula, more expressly, is *A* 1, 3, *B* 2, 4, 5, 7, *C* 6, 8, 9, 11, *D* 10, 12, *E* 13, 14; where the rhymes within the three

stanzas, it will be observed, are alternate, but, by the device of making the last rhyme of the first stanza begin the second, and the last of the second again begin the third, four rhymes clear all the three stanzas and prepare for the fifth of the final couplet. Take this from Spenser as an example:—

"Fair Proud! now tell me why should fair be proud,
Sith all world's glory is but dross unclean,
And in the shade of death itself shall shroud,
However now thereof ye little ween.
That goodly Idol, now so gay beseen,
Shall doff her flesh's borrowed fair attire,
And be forgot as it had never been,
That many now much worship and admire;
Ne any then shall after it inquire,
Ne any mention shall thereof remain,
But what this verse, that never shall expire,
Shall to your purchase with her thankless pain.
Fair! be no longer proud of that shall perish;
But that which shall you make immortal cherish."

But a still laxer form than this common Spenserian one was one to which even Surrey had helped himself, and of which there are examples in Spenser too, and others in Samuel Daniel (1562—1619). This form dispensed altogether with the interlinking of the three stanzas by rhymes common to the first and second and the second and third, and was content that the twelve lines should be three loose stanzas of alternate rhymes, connected only by a continuous meaning, and preceding the final couplet. Thus seven rhymes in all were allowed in the Sonnet, the formula being *A* 1, 3, *B* 2, 4, *C* 5, 7, *D* 6, 8, *E* 9, 11, *F* 10, 12, *G* 13, 14. It was of this free form of the Sonnet that Shakespeare availed himself; and all his famous Sonnets, with scarce an exception, are written in it. For example:—

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with viler worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.

> Or, if, I say, you look upon this verse
> When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
> Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
> But let your love even with my life decay,
>   Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
>   And mock you with me after I am gone."

To all time this type of Sonnet, though not the strict Italian, will remain, consecrated by Shakespeare's great usage, a true and sufficient English type. Even while Shakespeare was alive, however, there lingered a knowledge of the stricter Italian type, and a disposition to exhibit it also in English. The Sonnets of Donne (1573—1631), specimens though they are rather of metrical intellection than of lyrical effusion, are, most of them, more after the Italian mechanism than Spenser's, and much more than Shakespeare's. They are of five rhymes, of which two, by their interlinking, sustain the first eight lines of the Sonnet, leaving three for the other six lines. On the same principle, and with much more of softness and music in them, are the Sonnets of Drummond of Hawthornden (1585—1649), a poet imbued with Italian influences and fond of the Sonnet. But both in Donne's Sonnets and in Drummond's, no less than in Spenser's and Shakespeare's, the sounding epigrammatic couplet at the end is still a constant feature. The English ear seems to have grown so accustomed to this ending as to require it, and it was usual to print Sonnets with these two final lines coupled together for the eye by indentation from the rest.

It was reserved mainly for Milton to emancipate the English Sonnet from this peculiarity of the final rhyming couplet, by reasserting the Italian rule that it should be optional and occasional only, while at the same time he reverted to the Italian construction in other respects. An early student of the Italian poets, he had learnt the true music of the Sonnet from Petrarch most of all, so that, when he first ventured on trials of the Sonnet-form in English, he thought of it as the "Petrarchian Stanza." These first trials were made while he was still a Cambridge student, long before that "damp" fell round his path of which Wordsworth speaks as being already round it when he seized the Sonnet and the thing in his hands became a trumpet. The series of his

Sonnets, however, though beginning about 1630, extends to 1658; and most of them *were* those "soul-animating strains" which he blew at intervals from this instrument when other poetry was in forced abeyance from him, and he was engrossed in prose polemics. Milton's last sixteen Sonnets, indeed, with a verse or two besides, are the few occasional strains that connect, as by intermitted trumpet-blasts through twenty years, the rich minor poetry of his youth and early manhood with the greater poetry of his declining age in blindness after the Restoration.

Only one of the English Sonnets presents a termination in a rhyming couplet, though in three of the five Italian Sonnets included in the general series along with the English this liberty is taken. It may also be remarked that of the English Sonnets, which number eighteen in all, only nine, or exactly one half, are Sonnets of five rhymes; the other nine contain four rhymes only, and are constructed on the strictest Italian system of the two quatrains and the two tercets. Which of the Sonnets are four-rhymed only and which are five-rhymed, and what is the formula of each Sonnet individually, may be left to the reader's curiosity. What follows relates to the matter of the Sonnets, one by one, and the circumstances of their composition :—

SONNET I. TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

There is no means of dating this Sonnet precisely; but it is placed first by Milton himself, and must be referred either to the close of the Cambridge period, or to some time in the Horton period. It is the Sonnet of a youth to whom the return of May brings the thought of his youth passing companionless and a sense of love-longing. There is a recollection of the superstition that he who hears the nightingale before he hears the cuckoo will woo fortunately before the year is over. The heading "To the Nightingale" is not Milton's, but has been supplied by the editors. The first lines, taken by themselves, might have suggested the heading "To a Nightingale;" and I know of no neighbourhood where nightingales are more abundant than about Cambridge. But the rest of the Sonnet seems to imply, not that a particular

nightingale has been heard, but that the poet, looking at some "bloomy spray," judges it to be the evening haunt of some nightingale whom he would fain hear.

SONNET II.: ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and Draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

Milton prints this Sonnet after his Five Italian Sonnets and Canzone, so as to make it the seventh in the general series; but it may fitly be placed second. At all events, we know its exact date. He wrote it at or about the moment when Time had "stolen on his wing" the "three-and-twentieth year" of his life; and that was on the 9th of December, 1631. He was then at Cambridge, a B.A. of three years' standing, and was looking forward to his degree of M.A., and the close of his Cambridge career, in a few months. But the occurrence of the draft of the Sonnet among the Cambridge MSS. adds other illustrative particulars. It occurs there as an insertion into the first of two drafts, in Milton's hand, of a prose letter, of some length, which he sent, or meant to send, to a friend. This friend, whose name we do not know, had remonstrated with Milton on the aimless course of merely studious life he was then leading, and on the impropriety of his continuing it instead of dedicating his talents to the Church or some other active profession. Milton's reply is a courteous acknowledgment of the interest shown by the friend in his behalf, with a defence of his conduct, and a statement of his reasons for being in no hurry to enter the Church. Though all ordinary motives conspired to urge him into that or some other profession, yet a "sacred reverence and religious advisement," a principle of "not taking thought of being *late*, so it gave advantage to be more *fit*," had hitherto held him back. "That you "may see," he adds, "that I am something suspicious of myself, "and do take notice of a certain *belatedness* in me, I am the bolder "to send you some of my nightward thoughts some little while "ago, because they come in not altogether unfitly, made up in a "Petrarchian stanza, which I told you of." Here, accordingly,

follows the Sonnet on which we are now commenting. It had been written recently, probably on his last birthday, Dec. 9, 1631; he had mentioned it to his friend in conversation; and now he sends him a copy of it. Whatever his friend thought of it, we read it now with admiration.

SONNETS III.—VII.: FIVE ITALIAN SONNETS, WITH AN ACCOMPANYING CANZONE.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

These Italian pieces, which precede Sonnet II. in Milton's own editions, form a little group by themselves. They relate the story of Milton's love for some Italian lady, beautiful, dark-haired, accomplished, and fascinating by her grace and her powers of singing. In one of the Sonnets Charles Diodati is addressed as confidant, and is told that his stubborn friend, who had laughed at love hitherto, has at length yielded, and that his conqueress is not a fair-haired English maiden, but one of Diodati's own country-women, a foreign beauty, of stately carriage, and with eyes of a splendid black. In three others the lady herself is addressed directly; and in one, and in the Canzone, Milton excuses himself for writing in Italian, saying that this is the language of love, and that in which his lady delights.——Where then, in Milton's life, are the Sonnets and Canzone, and the incident which they chronicle, to be dated? Towards determining this, the fact that one of the Sonnets is addressed to Diodati is of some consequence. Diodati died in the summer of 1638, shortly after Milton set out on his Italian journey, though Milton did not know the fact till that journey was near its close and he was on his way home. Therefore, the Sonnets, if they are one series and refer to the same incident (which there is no reason to doubt), must have been written during Milton's stay in Italy, before he had heard the sad news of Diodati's death, and while he was still fancying him alive and well in England; or else they must have been written at some earlier period, before the visit to Italy, and while Diodati and Milton were together or within reach of each other in England itself. The first supposition has been generally adopted, and there is much in its favour. There is an Italian air about

the Sonnets; they breathe of Italy. They have been referred therefore, by common consent, to the time of Milton's Italian journey (1638-9). Some time and some where during that journey, it is supposed, he met the foreign beauty who captivated him. Warton imagines that she may have been the celebrated singer Leonora, whom Milton heard at Rome, and to whom he addressed three pieces of complimentary Latin verse (see them among the Latin Poems, and the Introduction to them). There is no real ground for the fancy. The lady, whoever she was, is described, in the first Sonnet, as a native of the Vale of the Reno, in the north of the Papal States, between Bologna and Ferrara. Now Milton visited this part of Italy in 1639, or towards the end of his tour, when, after having returned from Naples, and paid second visits, of two months each, to Rome and Florence, he passed through Bologna and Ferrara on his way to Venice and homewards. But the lady, though a Bolognese, may have been met in Venice, or perhaps even in Florence or Rome, before Milton had passed through Bologna. On the supposition that it was somewhere in Italy that he did meet her, the address to Diodati in one of the Sonnets must be regarded as a poetic apostrophe, by which Milton, desiring a confidant for his secret, introduced the name of the dearest of his friends left at home in England, himself of Italian name and descent. It was as if he said, "How surprised Diodati will be when he hears this!" little knowing that Diodati was then dead.——After all, however, may not the Italian Sonnets and Canzone have been written in England before the Italian journey, and even a good while before it? May not Milton, some time after he had left Cambridge, have met, in English society, the Bolognese beauty who charmed him? May not his attempts in Italian have been a tribute to her foreign loveliness, and to the sweetness of the language as heard from her lips,—an obedience even to some such little saying of hers as the Canzone seems to record? Would not the appeal to Diodati in the affair have then been the most natural thing in the world? On the whole, I still think the former supposition the likelier. I would rather not disturb the belief that the Sonnets and Canzone were written during the Italian journey, and that the vision of the Bolognese beauty was an incident of that journey. Yet the alternative

supposition is tenable, and might be supported. In the second of the Sonnets and in the Canzone there are expressions which might be construed in its favour. Nor must the fact be concealed that Italian critics find evidence in all the pieces of a less perfect knowledge of Italian than we should suppose Milton to have had after a year or more of residence in Italy. My friend Signor Saffi, whom I consulted on the subject in the year 1858, obliged me with a verdict which is perhaps as kindly as any an Italian could give. "As regards the form of the language," he wrote, "there "are here and there irregularities of idiom and grammar, and "metaphors which remind one of the false literary taste prevalent "in Italy when Milton visited that country; although such a "defect appears, in the English imitator, modified by the fresh-"ness of his native genius. The measure of the verse is generally "correct, nay, more than this, musical; and one feels, in perusing "these poems, that the mind of the young aspiring poet had, "from Petrarch to Tasso, listened attentively to the gentlest notes "of the Italian Muse, though unable to reproduce them fully in a "form of his own."

SONNET VIII.: "WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY."

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and earlier copy, in the hand of an amanuensis, but with title in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This Sonnet, the first of those which refer to English public affairs, was written in November 1642, and probably on Saturday the 12th of that month. The Civil War had then begun; and Milton, already known as a vehement Anti-Episcopal pamphleteer and Parliamentarian, was living, with two young nephews whom he was educating, in his house in Aldersgate Street, a suburban thoroughfare just beyond one of the city gates of London. After some of the first actions of the war, including the indecisive Battle of Edgehill (Oct. 23), the King's army, advancing out of the Midlands, with the King and Prince Rupert present in it, had come as near to London as Hounslow and Brentford, and was threatening a farther march to crush the Londoners and the Parliament at once. They were at their nearest on Saturday

the 12th of November; and all that day and the next there was immense excitement in London in expectation of an assault—chains put up across streets, houses barred, &c. It was not till the evening of the 13th that the citizens were reassured by the retreat of the King's army, which had been checked from a closer advance by a rapid march-out of the Trained Bands under Essex and Skippon. Milton, we are to fancy, had shared the common alarm. His was one of the houses which, if the Cavaliers had been let loose, it would have given them particular pleasure to sack. Knowing this, the only precaution he takes is, half in jest, and yet perhaps with some anxiety, to write a Sonnet addressed to the imaginary Royalist Captain, Colonel, or Knight, who may command the Aldersgate Street sacking party. "*On his dore when ye citty expected an assault*" is the original heading of the Sonnet in the copy of it, by an amanuensis, among the Cambridge MSS., as if the Sonnet had actually been pasted or nailed up on the outside of Milton's door. This title was afterwards deleted by Milton himself, and the other title substituted in his own hand; but the Sonnet appeared without any title at all in the editions of 1645 and 1673.

SONNET IX.: TO A LADY.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and Draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This Sonnet was left untitled by Milton: the title has been supplied by the editors. The date, almost certainly, was 1644; but who the lady was that is addressed is unknown. A certain Miss Davis has been suspected, the possibility of a marriage with whom Milton is said, by his nephew Phillips, to have contemplated after his desertion by his first wife had driven him to thoughts of divorce. But this is mere conjecture.

SONNET X.: "TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY."

(Editions of 1645 and 1673; and Draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This Sonnet must have been written in 1644 or 1645; and the lady addressed was Lady Margaret Ley, one of the daughters of James Ley, first Earl of Marlborough, a nobleman of whom

there still remained a respectful recollection in England. Born in 1552, he had been eminent as a lawyer before Queen Elizabeth's death; and, after a long career as Knight, Baronet, and Judge, he had been raised by James to the great office of Lord High Treasurer of England in 1624, and, at the same time, to a peerage as Baron Ley of Ley in Devonshire. The higher dignity of the Earldom of Marlborough was conferred on him by Charles in 1626-7, when he was seventy-four years of age. In 1628 he had been removed from the High Treasurership to the less laborious office of President of the Council, ostensibly on account of his old age, but really, it was thought, because he was not sufficiently compliant with the policy of Charles and Buckingham. He died in March 1628-9, immediately after the dissolution of Charles's Third Parliament, and, as the Sonnet hints, his death was believed to have been hastened by political anxiety at that crisis. He left three sons; the eldest of whom, Henry, succeeded him in the Earldom, but, dying in 1638, transmitted it to *his* son, James Ley, third Earl of Marlborough, who attained to unusual distinction by his services to the King in the Civil War, and by his various abilities. Among the surviving aunts of this young nobleman, and herself probably somewhat past her youth, was the Lady Margaret of the Sonnet. She had married a Captain Hobson, from the Isle of Wight; and both she and her husband seem to have taken the Parliamentarian side. They resided in London, and Milton had become acquainted with them. His nephew and biographer Phillips expressly says that, after his desertion by his first wife in 1643, Milton "made it his chief diversion now and then of an evening to visit the Lady Margaret Ley," adding, "This "lady, being a woman of great wit and ingenuity, had a particular "honour for him, and took much delight in his company, as "likewise Captain Hobson, her husband, a very accomplished "gentleman." Milton's compliment to her in the Sonnet is that she was a true daughter of her liberal father. Her political and religious opinions probably agreed with Milton's. This is the latest of the Sonnets printed in the edition of 1645, and it is there printed without a heading. The heading is from the Cambridge draft.

SONNETS XI. AND XII.: "ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES," AND "ON THE SAME."

(Edition of 1673; and Drafts, in Milton's own hand, with copies in another hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

The Treatises in question were Milton's four Treatises on the subject of Divorce, written between his desertion by his first wife in 1643 and her return to him and reconciliation with him in the autumn of 1645: viz. his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, which came first and passed through two editions, and his *Judgment of Martin Bucer*, his *Tetrachordon*, and his *Colasterion*, which followed, at intervals, in defence of the original publication. As the opinion broached by Milton in these pamphlets was a new and daring one, it shocked people greatly, and especially the Presbyterians, who were then in the ascendant in Parliament, and all-powerful in the Westminster Assembly. Milton's strange doctrine of Divorce was the subject of talk in society; it was attacked through the press; it even brought him into danger with the public authorities. As his doctrine concerned not mere theological belief only, but social law and morals, he was reputed one of the most dangerous of the Sectaries who then abounded, and whom the Presbyterians were bent on suppressing. An actual name was given to those who were supposed to have adopted his opinion. They were called "Miltonists" or "Divorcers." Milton's two Sonnets are his comments, one half jocose, the other contemptuous and indignant, on this execration with which he found himself surrounded. They were written late in 1645 or early in 1646, when the return of his wife and his reconciliation with her had abated his practical and personal interest in the success of his doctrine, and, though he still retained it, he had made up his mind not to argue it farther through the press. Either they were too late for insertion in the First Edition of his Poems (dated 1645, but published Jan. 2, 1645-6), or he judged it best to exclude them. In the *copies* of the Sonnets, in another hand, among the Cambridge MSS., both come under the title "*On the Detraction*," &c., the one beginning

"I did but prompt, &c.," being numbered for the press as the first of the two, and the other, "A book was writ, &c.," as the second. In the edition of 1673, however, the order was reversed. "A book was writ, &c." appeared first, without any title; and "I did but prompt" followed with the title "*On the Same.*" There are allusions in the Sonnets, and especially in the first, which require explanation in the Notes.

"ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT."

(Edition of 1673; and copy, in the hand of an amanuensis, among the Cambridge MSS.)

In the copy among the Cambridge MSS. this piece bears the simpler title "*On the Forcers of Conscience,*" and there is a direction, in Milton's own hand, that it should follow the two Sonnets relating to his Divorce Treatises. In the volume of 1673, however, the piece appears by itself under its present fuller title, and detached from the Sonnets. It is best now to restore it to the place originally intended for it. For it is, in reality, a continuation or extension of the vein of the two Divorce Sonnets, and must have been written about the same time, or hardly later than 1646. Partly on account of the outcry against Milton's Divorce Pamphlets among the Presbyterians, partly on more general grounds, he had parted company with them, and had attached himself rather to the party, or combination of parties, of which Cromwell was becoming the recognised head, and who were called by the general name of The Independents. It was the leading principle of this party, or combination of parties, to oppose the too rigorous establishment of that system of Presbyterian Church Government and Discipline, after the Scottish model, which had been decreed in England by the Long Parliament, and in part carried into effect, after the abolition of Episcopacy. It was their effort, at all events, to secure that, if this system were permanently established by the majority as the national English system, there should be room under it for freedom of conscience and worship for the dissenting minority. Gradually the notion of a Toleration of Independents and other Sects within certain limits under the established Pres-

byterianism was gaining ground in Parliament, chiefly in consequence of the power of the Parliamentarian Army, which was composed largely of Independents, Baptists, and more extreme sectaries; but the rigid Presbyterians, and especially the Presbyterian Divines of the Westminster Assembly, and most especially the small group of Scottish Divines who sat in that Assembly as assessors to their English brethren, were loud in their denunciations of the arch-heresy of Toleration, as they called it, and their calls for a suppression of all Sects and the enforcement of an absolute Presbyterian uniformity by the civil power. It is against these claims of strict Presbyterian supremacy that Milton speaks out in the present piece of verse. He intended it to be what may be called an Anti-Presbyterian and Pro-Toleration Sonnet; and the first fourteen lines, it may be observed, really do make a Sonnet. But, when he had reached the fourteenth line, Milton had not packed in all he meant to say; and so he adds six lines more of jagged verse, converting the piece into a kind of Sonnet with a scorpion's tail to it. There were precedents for such "Sonnets with tails" in Italian poetry. Although not published till 1673, the piece was probably in private circulation, and doing service for Independency and Liberty of Conscience, from 1646 onwards. The allusions in it, and especially the personalities, need explanation. It will be given in the Notes.

SONNET XIII.: "TO MR. H. LAWES, ON HIS AIRS."

(Edition of 1673; and two Drafts, in Milton's own hand, with a copy in another hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

One of the Cambridge drafts of this Sonnet fixes its date as Feb. 9, 1645-6. That Draft is headed "To my Friend, Mr. Henry Lawes: Feb. 9, 1645," and signed "J. M.;" the other Draft, though also in Milton's hand, bears this heading in another, "To Mr. Hen. Lawes, on the publishing of his Aires." Actually, the Sonnet first appeared in print, with Milton's name attached, as one of a few pieces of eulogistic verse prefixed to a volume published by Moseley in 1648 and entitled *Choice Psalmes, put into Musick for three Voices: composed by Henry and William Lawes,*

Brothers, and Servants to His Majestie. The inference is that, though written in Feb. 1645-6, and presented to Lawes about that time in mere private friendship, the lines were used by Lawes two years afterwards, with Milton's consent, for the public purpose of his volume, and that then their appropriation to this use was signified by a new title inserted in the second MS. draft.

Milton's friendship from his boyhood with the musician Henry Lawes, and the main facts of that interesting person's life till his co-operation with Milton in the production of the *Arcades* at Harefield, and of *Comus* at Ludlow, have been recorded in the Introductions to those two poems (see *antè*, pp. 220—222, and 231 *et seq.*). It will be remembered also that the original publication of *Comus* by itself in 1637, without the author's name, was owing to Lawes, and that, in his dedication of the poem to the young Lord Brackley, the musician had shown his high regard for the author by the terms in which he had spoken of it (see *antè*, p. 244). We have now to add that, in the intervening years, the reputation of Lawes in his art had been steadily growing, till there was perhaps no musical composer of his time more generally known and liked. Still retaining, along with his brother William, his position as one of the King's musicians and gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, and still connected by special professional engagements with the Bridgewater family, he had done much work in the way of setting to music songs by Carew, Herrick, Waller, Cartwright, and other popular poets. These songs of Lawes were favourites in English households, and the poets whose words were thus recommended by his airs could not thank him enough. There are verses by Herrick and others in which affectionate mention is made of "Harry" and his musical skill. And so the publisher Moseley, or perhaps Milton himself, in bringing out the first edition of Milton's Poems in 1645, did not forget that Lawes's name might be an advantage to the volume. "The Songs were set in Musick by Mr. Henry Lawes, Gentleman of the King's Chappel, and one of His Majesties private Musick," was the announcement on the title-page, referring to the songs in *Arcades* and *Comus*, and perhaps to others in the volume; and in the body of the volume was reprinted Lawes's dedication of *Comus* to Lord Brackley. Clearly, therefore, Milton's intimacy with Lawes had not been

interrupted even by the Civil War and the division of all Englishmen into Royalists and Parliamentarians. By his position, if not from his artistic temperament, Lawes was a Royalist; and indeed his brother William had been slain in the King's cause at the siege of Chester (1645), greatly to the King's grief, who is said to have put on private mourning for him. Not the less had Henry Lawes, who remained in London, his meetings with his old friend Milton, when they would lay politics aside and agree in music.

The present Sonnet is a tribute to this continued friendship. It was written, it may be noted, about a month after the publication of Milton's Poems, and may have been a gift to Lawes in acknowledgment of the use of his name in that volume. Milton, however, did not object to its publication, with other verses, in Lawes's *Choice Psalmes* published by Moseley in 1648, even though that volume contained a portrait of Charles I., then in his fallen and captive state, and was dedicated to Charles by Lawes in terms of devoted loyalty. By reproducing the Sonnet as late as 1673 in the second edition of his Poems, Milton may be supposed to have testified even then his affectionate recollection of Lawes. The Musician had then been dead eleven years. He died in 1662, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, after having lived to see the Restoration, to have the honour of composing the Coronation Ode for Charles II., and to be replaced in his position near Royalty, while his friend Milton, then the blind ex-Secretary of Cromwell, was in danger and disgrace. In addition to his *Choice Psalmes* of 1648 Lawes had published in his lifetime *Ayres and Dialogues for one, two, and three Voices: in three Books* (1653-58); and later publications attest the demand for his music after his death.

SONNET XIV.: "ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHERINE THOMSON, MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND, DECEASED 16 DECEMB. 1646."

(Edition of 1673; and two Drafts, in Milton's own hand, one of them erased, among the Cambridge MSS.)

The Sonnet itself, with its heading, which does not occur in the printed volume, but is taken from the Cambridge MS., supplies all the information we have respecting the person addressed.

Phillips, indeed, mentions that, some time in 1649, Milton "lodged at one Thomson's, next door to the Bull Head Tavern at Charing Cross, opening into the Spring Garden;" his stay there, however, being but by way of temporary accommodation, after he had left his house in Holborn, till his official rooms in Scotland Yard could be got ready (see *antè*, p. 169). It has been supposed that the Mrs. Catherine Thomson who died in 1646 may have been one of the Charing Cross family with whom Milton thus afterwards lodged. This is mere guess. Thomson, then as now, was a very common name in London.

SONNET XV.: "ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX AT THE SIEGE OF COLCHESTER."

(First printed by Phillips, at the end of his Life of Milton, prefixed to the English translation of Milton's State-Letters in 1694; but Draft, in Milton's own hand, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This Sonnet is usually headed now "To the Lord General Fairfax;" but it is better to restore the original title from Milton's own MS. Draft, though the pen is there drawn through the title to erase it. For one thing, this title fixes the date of the Sonnet. The siege of Colchester in Essex lasted from the 15th of June to the 28th of August, 1648, and was one of the most memorable incidents of what is called "the Second Civil War," *i.e.* of that spasmodic new rising of the English and Scottish Royalists on behalf of Charles I., then a prisoner in the Isle of Wight, which it required all the energy of Fairfax, the Parliamentarian commander-in-chief, and of Cromwell, his lieutenant-general, to put down, and which led very speedily to the King's trial and doom. While Cromwell managed the northern department of the war, meeting and beating the Duke of Hamilton and the Royalist Scots and English at Preston, Fairfax in person superintended the siege of Colchester; which town had been seized for the King, and was defended by the Earl of Norwich, Lord Capel, Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, and other Royalist chiefs. As Fairfax offered quarter only to the soldiers, but required the leaders to surrender at discretion, the defence was desperate, and both the garrison and the towns-

people were reduced to the last straits of starvation, having to eat grass and the flesh of horses, cats, and dogs. When the surrender did take place, Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle were tried by court-martial, and immediately shot, as released prisoners of war who had broken their *parole* to the Parliament in again taking arms for the King. The Earl of Norwich and Lord Capel were left to the mercy of Parliament; and Lord Capel was afterwards executed. The taking of Colchester was heard of with triumph by the Parliamentarians throughout England, and went as an addition to the renown of Fairfax acquired by his many actions since he had been made Parliamentary commander-in-chief in Dec. 1644. Milton, in this Sonnet, expresses the general feeling of the hour, not only about the particular victory, but also about the character of Fairfax, and England's farther hopes from him. Might not more than military service come from him? Might it not be his to perform the more difficult political part that remained, and settle the State in peace and purity? As we now know, this part was not to be Fairfax's. For the trial and deposition of the King he was prepared; but the execution of the King was too much for him. He, and, still more zealously, his wife, Lady Fairfax, protested against it; and, though he had remained steadily with the army and its other chiefs up to the very moment of that last act, and even retained his command-in-chief, with a seat in the Council of State, for some time after it, he at length (July 1650) resigned both, and retired into private life at his seat of Nunappleton in Yorkshire, leaving the supremacy for Cromwell. That Milton still retained for him in his retirement the high regard he had expressed in his Sonnet of 1648 is evident from a passage of eulogy in his *Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano*, written in 1654. "Neither canst thou be "passed over, Fairfax," he there writes in Latin in the course of an enumeration of the chiefs of the English Revolution—"a man "in whom nature and the divine favour have conjoined with the "greatest fortitude a modesty and a purity of life equally great. "Thou also deservest by thine own right and merit to be brought "in for a share of these praises, although now in that retirement "of thine, like Scipio Africanus of old at Liternum, thou hidest "thyself as much as thou canst, and hast conquered not the

"enemy alone, but also ambition, and, what conquers sometimes "the best of men, glory, and enjoyest thy virtues and illustrious "deeds in that most delightful and glorious rest which is the "end of all labours and even the greatest human actions; such "rest as, when it was enjoyed by the ancient heroes after wars "and renown not greater than thine, the poets who tried to praise "them despaired of being able worthily to represent otherwise "than by fabling them to have been received into heaven, and to "be reclining at the feasts of the Gods. But, whether it is, as I "would most readily believe, the state of your health, or whether "it is anything else, that has withdrawn you from public affairs, "of this I am most strongly assured, that nothing could have "torn you away from concerns of state unless you had seen how "great a saviour of liberty, what a firm and faithful support and "bulwark of the English Commonwealth, you were leaving in "your successor." Notwithstanding this assurance of Milton in 1654, Fairfax only half-liked Cromwell's Protectorate at the first; and very soon—perhaps most distinctly after the marriage of his young daughter, Mary, in Nov. 1657, to the afterwards notorious and witty Duke of Buckingham, then a Royalist outlaw—he liked it even less. After Cromwell's death his mind was made up for the restoration of Charles II.; and he came forth from his retirement to assist in that event. He did not, however, connect himself actively with the Restoration Government, but, returning to his repose, died Nov. 12, 1671, in the sixtieth year of his age. Whether the omission of the Sonnet to him in the edition of Milton's Poems published two years afterwards marked any change in Milton's feeling occasioned by Fairfax's concern with the Restoration, or whether the Sonnet was omitted merely as savouring too much of the pre-Restoration politics to be then allowable, can hardly be determined. The second supposition is the more probable.

SONNET XVI.: "TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, MAY 1652: ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL."

(First printed by Phillips at the end of his Life of Milton in 1694; but copy among the Cambridge MSS., in the hand of an amanuensis who wrote to Milton's dictation.)

Milton's admiration of Cromwell, an admiration far transcending any he had for Fairfax, is attested by many proofs, and, amongst them, by that long and impassioned outburst of Latin eulogium on Cromwell in the *Defensio Secunda*, into which the eulogy on Fairfax quoted above is slipped but as an episode. To Milton Cromwell, to the last, was "our chief of men," the very greatest and noblest of Englishmen of that time. As he had known Cromwell face to face, had sat at the Council-board with Cromwell day after day in the capacity of Foreign Secretary, had heard Cromwell speak familiarly, and had received instructions from him for the despatches that were to be put into Latin, this opinion of Milton's, deliberately formed and expressed, deserves remembrance. No two men, I believe, were more essentially like-minded, more one at heart in their thoughts about the great problems of the English nation at that time, than the two whom fate had thus drawn together in such different capacities—Cromwell, the supreme soldier and man of action, raised at length to be the ruler; Milton, the poet and idealist, brought beside this ruler as a scholarly official. The Sonnet under notice, however, is not, as the mere title "*To Cromwell*" sometimes given to it might lead one to imagine, Milton's estimate of Cromwell from the whole of his career, or even after Milton's Secretaryship to him singly had begun. It is an address by Milton to Cromwell at a particular moment of Cromwell's career and on a particular occasion. What was the moment, and what was the occasion? We learn both from the erased, but still legible, heading of the Sonnet in the Cambridge MS. copy. The date was May 1652. Cromwell was not yet Protector, though he was the first man in the Republic, and they were proposing to make him its head. Since the execution of the King, and the establishment of the Commonwealth under the government of the Parliament with a Council of State,

he had been away in Ireland, as Lord-Lieutenant of that country, trampling down its long Rebellion and reducing it to order (1649-50); he had also been in Scotland, and had fought the Battle of Dunbar (Sept. 3, 1650) there, and taken other measures which, when followed up by the crowning victory of Worcester (Sept 3, 1651), utterly ruined the cause of Charles II. in Scotland, as well as in England, and united both parts of the island in one Commonwealth. These were the acts of Cromwell freshest in men's minds, and he had been again in London through the winter of 1651-2, when the Sonnet was written. The Sonnet breathes the feeling of many at that hour with respect to him. Now that *he* was at home again, would not things be better managed than they had been in his absence by the persistent Rump of the Long Parliament and the Council of State? Especially in matters of Religion was not fresh zeal necessary? Throughout England and Wales, or in many parts of them, Church matters were in chaos—Presbyterian ministers here and Independents there, mixed with the wrecks of the old parish clergy; no regular arrangement for the provision of ministers; disputes as to the method of such provision, whether by a common fund out of the tithes, or by voluntary contribution without tithes at all; many districts meanwhile in spiritual destitution for want of fit pastors and preachers. For the consideration of such questions and the remedying of such evils there had been appointed a Parliamentary "Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel;" and this Committee seems to have been in unusual activity after Cromwell's return. "March 29, 1652," writes Whitlocke in his *Memorials*, "proposals were tendered to the Committee for Propagating the "Gospel for supply of all parishes with able and godly ministers, "for settling of right constituted churches," &c.; and again, "May "4, 1652: referred to the Committee to consider how a competent "maintenance for godly ministers may be settled in lieu of tithes." In connexion with which, as relating to the same business, and probably to the same date, take the following passage from the Autobiography of the Presbyterian Richard Baxter (Part I. p. 115). "When the part of the Parliament called the Rump or Common-"wealth was sitting, the Anabaptists, Seekers, &c., flew so high "against Tithes and Ministry that it was much feared lest

"they would have prevailed at last; wherefore I drew up a "petition for the Ministry, which is printed under the name "of the Worcestershire Petition; which, being presented by "Colonel John Bridges and Mr. Thomas Foley, was accepted "with thanks, and seemed to have a considerable tendency to "some good resolutions." In short, there was then some form of the controversy respecting a State Church and endowments for the clergy, and the Presbyterian ministers more especially seemed to their enemies to be trying to get for themselves the good things that had belonged to the abolished Prelatic Church. It was expected that Cromwell, whose sympathies had been with the Independents and Sectaries, would have something to say to this; and Milton's Sonnet expresses that expectation. It is a call to Cromwell to save England from a mercenary ministry of any denomination, or a new ecclesiastical tyranny of any form. Cromwell's Protectorate (Dec. 1653—Sept. 1658), with Milton's closer connexion with him during that Protectorate, came later. Yet the Sonnet may well stand as Milton's tribute of respect to Cromwell on the whole; and little wonder that he did not dare print it in the edition of his Poems in 1673.

SONNET XVII.: "TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER."

(First printed by Phillips at the end of his Life of Milton in 1694; but copy, from Milton's dictation, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This Sonnet breathes the same spirit as the last, and may have been written at the same time, or perhaps somewhat earlier. If it was written in 1652, Vane was in his fortieth-year when it was addressed to him, and was one of the Council of State; but, as his father was still alive, he was always known as the Younger Vane. It was recollected, moreover, how he had entered the Long Parliament at the age of twenty-seven, having already distinguished himself in America, and how all through the Parliament he had acted and been regarded as one of the subtlest and boldest theorists of the extreme Revolutionary party. In his style of mind he was what would now be called a *doctrinaire*, or abstract thinker, with perhaps a dash of the fanatic; and, as

Milton hints, he had exercised himself very particularly on the question of the relations and mutual limits of Church and State, having had practical occasion to consider that question as early as 1636 when he was Governor of Massachusetts. After the Restoration he was brought to the scaffold, June 14, 1662. Milton's Sonnet to him was necessarily omitted in the volume of 1673. It expresses the notion Milton had formed of Vane from observation of his career in the Long Parliament, and perhaps also from personal acquaintance.

SONNET XVIII.: "ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT."

(Edition of 1673.)

This, the most powerful of Milton's Sonnets, was written in 1655, and refers to the persecution instituted, in the early part of that year, by Charles Emmanuel II., Duke of Savoy and Prince of Piedmont, against his Protestant subjects of the valleys of the Cottian Alps. This Protestant community, half French and half Italian, and known as the Waldenses or Vaudois, were believed to have kept up the tradition of a primitive Christianity from the time of the Apostles. At all events, the general European Reformation had found them already in possession of tenets and forms of Church observance such as the Reformation proposed for all, and ready to acquiesce in its new teachings. There had been various persecutions of them since the Reformation; but that of 1655 surpassed all. By an edict of the Duke they were required to part with their property and leave his dominions within twenty days, or else to become Roman Catholics. On their resistance, forces were sent into their valleys, and the most dreadful atrocities followed. Many were butchered, others were taken away in chains, and hundreds of families were driven for refuge to the mountains covered with snow, to live there miserably, or perish with cold and hunger. Among the Protestant nations of Europe, and especially in England, the indignation was immediate and violent. Cromwell, who was then Protector, took up the matter with his whole strength. He caused Latin letters, couched in the strongest terms, to be immediately sent, not only to the offending Duke of Savoy, but also to the chief Princes and

Powers of Europe. These Letters were all drawn up by Milton, and may be read among his Letters of State. An ambassador was also sent to collect information; a Fast Day was appointed; a subscription of 40,000*l.* was raised for the sufferers; and altogether Cromwell's remonstrances were such that, backed as they would have been, if necessary, by armed force, the cruel edict was withdrawn, and a convention made with the Vaudois, allowing them the exercise of their worship. Milton's Sonnet is his private and more tremendous expression in verse of the feeling he expressed publicly, in Cromwell's name, in his Latin State Letters. Every line labours with wrath.

SONNET XIX.: ON HIS BLINDNESS.

(Edition of 1673.)

The last Sonnet, if not also the two preceding it, had been written by Milton after he had lost his sight. His blindness, which had been coming on slowly for ten years, and had been hastened by his labour in writing his *Defensio Prima pro Populo Anglicano* in answer to Salmasius (1651), appears to have been complete in 1653, when he was only forty-five years of age. This appears from a statement of his nephew Phillips in his Life of Milton; from one of Milton's own Familiar Epistles, giving an exact account of his blindness and of its first symptoms (dated Sept. 28, 1654, and addressed *Leonardo Philaræ, Atheniensi*); from passages in Milton's prose pamphlets; and from the second of the two subsequent Sonnets to Cyriack Skinner. The fact is corroborated by a minute of the Council of State, of date March 11, 1651-2, appointing Mr. Weckerlyn to be assistant to Milton in his Foreign Secretaryship to the Council. At this last date Milton was not quite blind, for there are signatures of his to nearly as late a date; but his blindness was then such at least as to require official assistance. The year 1652, or, at latest, the year 1653, must have finished the disaster. Milton, therefore, we are to imagine, after having been Secretary to the Council of State for a year or two with his sight failing, continued to act as Secretary through Cromwell's Protectorate (1653-58)

with his sight totally gone. Almost all that he had written after the close of 1651, if not for a year or two before that, had been written by the method of dictation; and hence his Sonnets to Cromwell and Vane do not appear in his own hand. But, certainly, the Sonnet on the Piedmontese Massacre, and all his State Letters for Cromwell or his son Richard, and all his contemporary pamphlets, must have been dictated. The blindness, thus falling upon Milton in the prime of his manhood, and shrouding the last two-and-twenty years of his life in darkness, was felt as the greatest of calamities by himself, and was pointed to with coarse exultation by his enemies, at home and abroad, as a divine judgment on him for his defences of the execution of Charles I., and for the part he had otherwise taken in the English Revolution. Again and again in Milton's later writings, in prose and in verse, there are passages of the most touching sorrow over his darkened and desolate condition, with yet a tone of the most pious resignation, and now and then an outbreak of a proud conviction that God, in blinding his bodily eyes, had meant to enlarge and clear his inner vision, and make him one of the world's truest seers and prophets. The present Sonnet is one of the first of these confidences of Milton on the subject of his blindness. It may have been written any time between 1652 and 1655; but it follows the Sonnet on the Piedmontese Massacre in Milton's own volume of 1673.

SONNET XX.: TO MR. LAWRENCE.

(Edition of 1673.)

The first impression, on reading this Sonnet, is that it must have been written before Milton was blind. It is an invitation to his friend Lawrence, in some winter season, when walking out of doors was disagreeable, to an occasional pleasant meeting within doors, when they might enjoy a neat repast and a glass of wine together, with talk and music. One naturally refers this mood of cheerfulness to the time of Milton's life which preceded his blindness. Accordingly it has been argued by some that the Sonnet must have been written about 1646, and ought to be placed beside the Sonnet to Henry Lawes.

In that case, however, the person addressed "Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son," cannot have been, as these words have always suggested, a son of the well-known Henry Lawrence of St. Ives, from whom Cromwell rented his house and farm in that neighbourhood, and who, after having been member for Westmoreland in the Long Parliament, became a staunch Oliverian, and was made President of Cromwell's Council (1654) and one of his House of Lords (1657). For there is a letter of this Henry Lawrence extant which proves that in the year 1646 his eldest son was then exactly thirteen years of age (Wood's Athenæ, IV. 64: Note by Bliss). Milton's invitation to a neat repast and wine cannot have been to a youngster like that. Hence, still on the supposition that the Sonnet must have been written about 1646, some commentators have concluded that the person addressed was no other than Henry Lawrence himself, the future President, but then no more than M.P. for Westmoreland. They find that he was a person whose talents and principles would have made him a fit companion for Milton, that in 1646 he had published a book called "A Treatise of our Communion and Warre with Angells," and that he wrote other things afterwards. They find also that Milton, in his *Defensio Secunda* (1654), speaks of President Lawrence as one of the politicians of the time known to him either by friendship or by reputation. "*Montacutum, Laurentium, summo ingenio ambos optimisque artibus expolitos*" ("Montague and Lawrence, both men of the highest talent and thoroughly accomplished in the best arts") are his words; where the Montague associated with Lawrence is Edward Montague, afterwards Earl of Sandwich. But, if the person addressed in the Sonnet was actually the Henry Lawrence remembered as the President of Oliver's Council, how are we to interpret the opening line, "Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son?" The future President was forty-six years of age in 1646, and *his* father, Sir John Lawrence of St. Ives, had died when he was but a child (Feb. 1604-5). No recollection, and scarcely any tradition, of this long dead knight could have been in Milton's mind. In short, after all, the person addressed in the Sonnet *is* a son of the President, and the President is only "the virtuous father" of the Sonnet, and not its recipient. This is settled by Phillips

in his Life of Milton, where, among the "particular friends" of Milton, who visited him most frequently during the eight years when he lived in his house in Petty France, Westminster (1652—1660), he mentions "Young Lawrence (the son of him that was President of Oliver's Council), to whom there is a Sonnet among the rest in his printed Poems." This statement of Phillips has been overlooked by the commentators, or there would have been no question on the subject. He does not mention which of the sons of the President was the "Young Lawrence" so often at Milton's house; but, as the eldest son, Edward Lawrence, died in 1657, while Milton was still a tenant of the house in Petty France, it may be assumed that his visitor there was the second son, Henry Lawrence, who became heir in 1657, succeeded to the property on his father's death in 1664, and lived till 1679, or five years beyond Milton. This being concluded, however, or whichever son of the President is taken as "the Young Lawrence" addressed, it follows that the Sonnet cannot have been written so early as 1646; at which year, as we have seen, the future President's eldest son was only thirteen years of age. Ten years later that son was twenty-three years of age, and his brother Henry, the most probable recipient of the Sonnet, was a year or two younger. The Sonnet, then, we should say, was written after 1655, and when Milton was in his condition of total blindness. And, though this may not at first seem consistent with the cheerful vein of the Sonnet, the explanation is easy. Phillips's account of his uncle's life gives us a glimpse of the household in Petty France which is not altogether one of gloom. Milton's first wife indeed had died there in 1652 or 1653, soon after he had taken possession of the house; and he had thus been left in his blindness, a widower with three young daughters. But, even during the time of his widowhood, and more after his marriage with his second wife in Nov. 1656, the house was enlivened by the little hospitalities that had to be shown to the numerous visitors that came to see him. Some of these were foreigners of distinction; others were Londoners of rank; but most assiduous of all were former pupils, and other enthusiastic young men, who accounted it a privilege to read to him, or act as his amanuenses, and to hear him talk. There was a group of such young admirers,

and "young Lawrence" was one of them. Sometimes, as we are to fancy, he accompanied Milton in his walks, yielding him the tendance which a blind man required; and Milton's Sonnet is to be taken as a kindly message to the youth, in some season of bad weather, not to stop his visits on that account, but to let him have his company now and then within doors.

SONNET XXI.: TO CYRIACK SKINNER.

(Edition of 1673; and copy of the last ten lines, in the hand of an amanuensis, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This Sonnet also, like the last, might appear, on a first reading, to belong to a time before Milton's blindness. For it also is in a hospitable vein, and invites to leisure and mirth. Moreover the eighth line, "And what the Swede intend and what the French," might perhaps most naturally suggest a time before the Peace of Westphalia (1648), when French armies under Turenne and other generals, and Swedish and mixed armies under Vrangel and others, were fighting out the last dregs of that *Thirty years' war* the Swedish part in which had been so striking at an earlier stage. Yet, as the Swedish activity in Europe did not end in 1648 any more than the French—as, in fact, the wars of the Swedish King Charles X. (1654—1660) against Poland, Russia, and Denmark, were as loud matters of European rumour as the contemporary wars of the French King Louis XIV. against Spain in the Netherlands—it would be an ignorant interpretation of the line that would make it necessarily throw back the Sonnet to the close of the *Thirty years' war.* And the Sonnet itself, besides that it comes immediately after that to Mr. Lawrence in Milton's own volume of 1673, looks like an invitation in the same strain as that Sonnet, and written about the same time, but to a different person. There is a correspondence even between the compliment of pedigree which opens this Sonnet, "Cyriack, whose grandsire, &c.," and that which opens its predecessor, "Lawrence, of virtuous father, &c." All that we know too of Cyriack Skinner and his connexion with Milton confirms the notion that the two Sonnets were written about the same time, *i.e.* about 1655, after

Milton was blind and when he was living in his house in Petty France.

Phillips, in his list of the friends of Milton who visited him there, mentions, "above all, Mr. Cyriack Skinner;" words which imply that Skinner was even a more frequent visitor than young Lawrence. There is even a probability that he had been one of Milton's pupils; for Wood describes him (Ath. Oxon. III. 1119) as "a merchant's son of London, an ingenious young gentleman and scholar to Jo: Milton," informing us farther that he became a leading member of Harrington's celebrated political debating club, called *The Rota*, which held its meetings in 1659 at "the Turk's Head in the New Palace Yard at Westminster." From the Sonnet itself we learn that, besides being thus interested in political speculations, or before being so interested, Skinner was an eager student of mathematical and physical science. Wood seems to have been wrong in calling him "a merchant's son of London;" for he is otherwise known as the third son of William Skinner, a Lincolnshire squire, who had married Bridget, second daughter of the famous lawyer and judge Sir Edward Coke. This explains the compliment of pedigree in the first line of the Sonnet. As this William Skinner died in 1627, Cyriack, his son, though described as "an ingenious young gentleman" in 1659, must have been considerably older than young Lawrence. There is extant a deed of conveyance, of the date May 7, 1660, by which Milton makes over to "Cyriack Skinner, of Lincoln's Inn, Gentleman," a Bond for 400*l.* given to Milton by the Commissioners of Excise (Mr. Leigh Sotheby's "Milton Ramblings," p. 129). The transaction proves how intimate Milton was with Skinner; for it was on the eve of the Restoration, when property invested in Excise Bonds was not likely to be worth much to Milton or his representatives. The deed also disproves the idea that Cyriack Skinner was himself a merchant, an idea which has somehow been substituted for the tradition that he was a merchant's son.

But, if not a merchant, or a merchant's son, Cyriack Skinner had brothers, or other near relatives, in Daniel Skinner and Thomas Skinner, who are heard of as London merchants as early as 1651, carrying on business in Mark Lane. Nay more, a

son of this Daniel Skinner, merchant of Mark Lane, himself named Daniel, became so very closely connected with Milton in the last years of his life that there has been much confusion, on that account, between him and (his uncle?) Cyriack. It may have been in or about 1673 that this Daniel Skinner, then a mere youth, who had been at Trinity College, Cambridge, and had in that year taken his B.A. degree, became, perhaps through Cyriack's recommendation, Milton's chief amanuensis. He was employed in making a fair transcript for the press of Milton's Latin Treatise *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, which had been long in progress, and the rough copy of which, in the hands of various previous amanuenses, but especially of one, had at length been finished. Skinner had transcribed a considerable portion, amounting to 196 pages out of the total of 735 of which the MS. consisted, and had gone through the rest, making corrections and inserting a piece here and there, when Milton died. By Milton's own arrangement, the MS., thus ready for the press, together with a transcript of all Milton's Latin State-Letters written by him for the Council of State, Cromwell, and Richard Cromwell, remained in young Skinner's hands, with a view to their publication. As the Letters of State, from their nature, could not safely then be published in England, Skinner, in 1675, entered into negotiations with Daniel Elzevir, the famous printer of Amsterdam. The MSS., both of the Letters and of the Treatise of Theology, were in Elzevir's hands, when (1676) a surreptitious edition of the former was printed by a London bookseller, into whose hands copies of the Letters had come. Annoyed by this, the English Government made inquiries about the papers that Milton had left; and it was ascertained that Daniel Skinner, B.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge, had some such papers. He was communicated with; had a special interview with Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State; and was told that, if he proceeded farther in the business, he would get himself into trouble, hurt his prospects, &c. Letters on the subject also passed between Elzevir and Sir Joseph Williamson, and Elzevir engaged that he would have nothing more to do with the affair. Skinner went over to Amsterdam himself in 1676 to recover the MSS.; but, though he professed to be glad that they had not been printed, and had even offered to give

them up to the English Government, his movements were so uncertain that Government had to give him a hint through the authorities of Trinity College. A Letter is extant from the celebrated Dr. Isaac Barrow, then Master of Trinity, dated Feb. 13, 1676-7, addressed to Skinner, ordering his immediate return to College on pain of expulsion, and warning him against publishing any writing "mischievous to the Church or the State." This seems to have brought him back; for he took his M.A. degree in 1677, and in May 1679 he was promoted to a Senior Fellowship in the College. The price of his promotion, doubtless, was the surrender of the perilous MSS. At all events they did come into Sir Joseph Williamson's hands, and were stowed away by him, with other lumber, in one of the presses of the State Paper Office, where they lay untouched and unheard of till the year 1823. In that year they were discovered by Mr. Robert Lemon, Deputy Keeper of the State Papers, wrapped in the original sheet of brown paper, addressed "*Mr. Skinner, Merchant,*" in which they had found their way back from Holland to the premises of young Skinner's father in Mark Lane. The discovery was hailed with interest; and in 1825 the long-lost treatise *De Doctrinâ Christianâ* was given to the world by Dr. Sumner, Bishop of Winchester. The State Papers, having been already accessible in print since 1676, did not require fresh publication. The original MS. of the Treatise, partly in Daniel Skinner's hand, partly in other hands corrected by his, remains in the State Paper Office.

It is worth mentioning that the leaf of the Cambridge Volume of Milton MSS. which contains ten lines of the present Sonnet to Cyriack Skinner, and the whole of the following, is a leaf of quarto size, presenting every appearance of having been torn out of some other MS. volume, and that the paper is of the same quality and size as that used for a portion of the MS. of the Treatise of Christian Doctrine. The inference seems to be that that Treatise had been at least begun, as early as 1655, in the house in Petty France.

SONNET XXII. : SECOND SONNET TO CYRIACK SKINNER.

(First printed by Phillips, at the end of his Life of Milton, in 1694 ; but copy, in the hand of an amanuensis, among the Cambridge MSS.)

This touching Sonnet, the MS. copy of which is on the same leaf as the copy of the last, but in a different hand, must have been written at some little interval of time ; perhaps in 1655, but certainly not later than 1656. It is a Sonnet on Milton's blindness, written, as it purports, on the third anniversary of the day from which he dated the completeness of that calamity. Its being addressed to Cyriack Skinner is a proof of the esteem which Milton felt for that friend. The tenor of the closing lines prevented its publication in 1673.

SONNET XXIII. : TO THE MEMORY OF HIS SECOND WIFE.

(Edition of 1673 ; and copy, in the hand of an amanuensis, among the Cambridge MSS.)

After some years of widowhood, Milton, still residing in Petty France, Westminster, had married, Nov. 12, 1656, at St. Mary Aldermanbury, London, his second wife, Catherine Woodcock, daughter of a Captain Woodcock, of Hackney. His wedded life with her, however, was doomed to be brief. She died in childbirth fifteen months after her marriage, and was buried at St. Margaret's, Westminster, Feb. 10, 1657-8. The infant daughter she had borne survived but about a month. Thus, in his fiftieth year, Milton was left in second widowhood, with his three young daughters by his first wife, the eldest not twelve years of age, partly depending on his charge, and partly deputed to take charge of him. There can be no sadder picture than that of the blind, stern man, in 1658, going about his vacant house, the poor children not understanding him, and half afraid of him ; and whoever visits the house now may do so with that picture in his mind. For the house still stands, and may be visited—actually the "pretty garden-house in Petty France, Westminster, next door to the Lord Scudamore's, and opening into St. James's Park," which Milton occupied from 1652 to 1660 ; though now

not "pretty," nor a "garden-house" any longer, but sorely disguised, degraded, and blocked in, as "No. 19, York Street, Westminster." Going about in that house, or seated by himself in one of its rooms, as they may still be seen, Milton thinks much of his dead wife, far more really a partner of his heart than the first wife had been, but remembers also that first wife, the mother of his children, and wonders what may become of these children, left now with neither mother nor substitute. From his despondency, as we know, he roused himself to resume that poem of *Paradise Lost* which he had schemed eighteen years before. But the sense of his loss recurs, and intrudes itself into his dreams. One night his dream is strangely happy. He sees his lately dead wife, not dead, but alive, and returned to him clad all in white like one of the Saints, her face veiled, and stooping to embrace him. He wakes from his dream to find it but a dream, and his night brought back; but he commemorates the dream in a Sonnet. The reader ought to notice the full significance of the words of the Sonnet. It seems to be implied that Milton had never actually beheld his second wife with his bodily eyes, but had married her after he was blind, and with no acquaintance with her dating from before his blindness. Hence, though in his dream he *sees* her, it is as a radiant figure with a veiled face. He had not carried into sleep the recollection out of which the face could be formed, and could only know that love, sweetness, and goodness must have dwelt in one who had that saint-like figure.

The handwriting of the copy of this, the last of Milton's Sonnets, in the Cambridge MSS., is a peculiar one, and has been identified. It is distinctly the handwriting of the amanuensis who wrote the greater part of that original MS. of the Treatise on Christian Doctrine which Daniel Skinner was afterwards employed partly to transcribe and partly to revise and correct, and which now lies in the State Paper Office. This amanuensis must have been much employed by Milton from 1658 onwards. Milton's signature to the deed of May 1660, already mentioned (p. 305), conveying an Excise Bond for 400*l.* to Cyriack Skinner, is not an autograph signature, though in such a document, if in any, an autograph was to be expected. It is a vicarious signature in the hand of this same amanuensis.

TRANSLATIONS.

"THE FIFTH ODE OF HORACE, *Lib. I.*, ENGLISHED."

(Edition of 1673.)

Such is the title in the Table of Contents prefixed to the volume of 1673; but the heading of the piece itself in the body of the volume is more elaborate, as follows: "The Fifth "Ode of Horace, Lib. I., *Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa*, "rendered almost word for word, without rhyme, according to the "Latin measure, as near as the language will permit." Still farther to call attention to the exactness of the translation, there is printed, parallel with it, on the opposite page, the original Latin of Horace, with this heading: "AD PYRRHAM. *Ode V. Horatius ex Pyrrhæ illecebris tanquam e naufragio enataverat, cujus amore irretitos affirmat esse miseros.*" ("TO PYRRHA. Ode V. Horace had escaped from the allurements of Pyrrha, as by swimming from shipwreck, and he pronounces miserable those who are ensnared by love of her.") The particular Ode on the translation of which Milton bestowed so much pains is one on which many translators have since tried their hands; but it may be doubted whether any of them has beaten Milton. His translation, if not quite word for word, is nearly so; and the rhythm he has adopted, though not answering in the least to the proper scansion of the metre of the Ode, is meant to do duty to the English ear for the metre as ordinarily read by accent only, and does so all the better because of a certain strangeness, arising from the absence of rhyme and the retention of the Latin syntax. On the whole, however, the thing is a trifle. It must have been written after 1645, as it does not appear in the edition of that year.

"NINE OF THE PSALMS DONE INTO METRE, WHEREIN ALL BUT WHAT IS IN A DIFFERENT CHARACTER ARE THE VERY WORDS OF THE TEXT, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL."

(Edition of 1673.)

The Psalms grouped together under this heading are Psalms LXXX.—LXXXVIII.; and the group is ushered in with the

dating "*April* 1648: *J. M.*," showing at what time they were translated.

There can be no doubt, I think, that Milton was moved to his experiment by the interest which was then felt, both in England and Scotland, and had been felt for some years, in the project of a complete new Version of the Psalms, which should supersede, for public worship, the old English Version of Sternhold and Hopkins and others, first published complete in 1562, and the Version, partly the same, that had been in use in Scotland since 1565, and was known as Lekprevik's, from the name of the printer who had published it that year in Edinburgh. In spite of competing Versions of the Psalms, or of some of them, these had remained substantially the authorized Psalters in the two countries till the meeting of the Long Parliament. But, after the meeting of that body, and especially after the Westminster Assembly had been convoked to aid it in religious matters (July 1643), and the English and Scots had come to a kind of understanding that there should be a conformity between the two countries on the basis of a common Confession of Faith, common forms of worship, and common Church-government, a revision or renovation of the Psalter had been much discussed. It was one of those matters on which the Westminster Assembly were especially required to deliberate and report to the Parliament. Hence a considerable activity in urging the claims of versions already made, either in print or in manuscript, by persons recently dead or still living. There was no chance, indeed, for the Version purporting to be King James's, but mainly done, under his auspices, by Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, afterwards Earl of Stirling, which had been published at Oxford in 1631, and which Charles, out of respect to his father, had tried hard to force upon Scotland. But George Withers, the Puritan poet, had published a Translation (1632); and, not to speak of other Versions, acknowledged or anonymous, there was one by no less public a person in England than the pious Francis Rous, member of the Long Parliament for Truro, and himself a lay-member of the Westminster Assembly (1st edit. 1641, 2nd 1643); while in Scotland it was known that Versions had been made, or were being made, by Mr. Zachary Boyd, one of the ministers of Glasgow, and by Sir William Mure,

Knight, of Rowallan. On the whole, Rous's Version had most friends; and a revised edition of it, carefully made, was recommended by the Westminster Assembly to the Parliament (Nov. 1645). With this Version, by one of themselves, the Commons were well satisfied; and it was again printed in its revised form in 1646. But, as the Lords, or some of them, had taken up a rival Version, "close and proper to the Hebrew," by a Mr. William Barton, M.A. of Oxford (published in 1644), they were slow to acquiesce in the preference for Rous; and, notwithstanding much urging of the subject by the Commons, and also by the Assembly, it stood over unsettled—Rous's Version generally accepted, indeed, by the English Puritans, and used by them as having had a kind of public sanction, but that sanction not so absolute but that English worship could remain at liberty in the matter of a Psalter, and could use Barton's or any other at hand, or wait for the advent of Tate and Brady (1696). In Scotland, however, there was a compensation for Rous. The recommendation of the Westminster Assembly had had weight with the General Assemblies of the Scottish Church and with the Scottish Parliament; and, after a fresh consideration of the subject by these bodies, and much revision and correction, in the course of which Mr. Zachary Boyd's native labours were again heard of, a Version based on Rous's was published in Edinburgh in 1650, as the one Version authorized by the General Assembly and by Parliament to be sung in congregations and in families. To this day the Version holds its place in Scotland; and, from long use, and its own simple and deep, if rude, merits, a kind of sacredness is attached to it in the minds both of the clergy and of the people.

That Milton, in his experiment in April 1648, had some view to the controversy then going on as to the Psalter that should be used in England, and that he may even have thought that a better Psalter might be provided than either Rous's or Barton's, is rendered the likelier by the form which his experiment took. The measure he uses for all the Nine Psalms chosen is, like Rous's, the ordinary Service metre, of eights and sixes, which people were most accustomed to sing, and to which most Psalm tunes had been set; the only difference, in this respect, being that Milton rhymes the first and third lines, while Rous rhymes only

the second and fourth. Again, Milton, in the heading prefixed to all the nine, claims the merit of having translated directly from the original Hebrew and of having kept close to that original. As these were points of consequence, he takes even the extreme precaution of printing in Italic letters whatever words or phrases had no counterpart in the original, but were required by the exigencies of the English verse or rhyme; and he puts occasionally in the margin the original Hebrew word, spelt in English letters, or some indication in English of the peculiar significance of some Hebrew word. With all Milton's pains, I must give it as my opinion that his Version of these Nine Psalms, as a whole, is much inferior to what we should have expected from him. It perhaps hardly comes up to Rous's, and it is decidedly inferior to the Scottish authorized Version founded on Rous's. Take the opening of Psalm LXXX.—

MILTON'S VERSION.

Thou Shepherd that dost Israel *keep*,
  Give ear *in time of need*,
Who leadest like a flock of sheep
  Thy loved Joseph's seed,
That sitt'st between the cherubs *bright*,
  Between their wings outspread,
Shine forth, *and from thy cloud give light*,
  And on our foes thy dread.

In Ephraim's view and Benjamin's,
  And in Manasseh's sight,
Awake thy strength, come, and *be seen*
  To save us *by thy might*.
Turn us again; *thy grace divine*
  To us, O God, *vouchsafe;*
Cause thou thy face on us to shine,
  And then we shall be safe.

ROUS'S VERSION: ED 1646.

Hear, Israel's Shepherd! like a flock
  thou that dost Joseph guide;
Shine forth, O thou that doest between
  the cherubims abide.

In Ephraim's and Benjamin's
 and in Manasseh's sight,
Come in for our salvation;
 do thou stir up thy might.

Lord, turn us; cause thy face to shine,
 and then full safe we are.

SCOTTISH AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Hear, Israel's Shepherd! like a flock
 thou that dost Joseph guide;
Shine forth, O thou that dost between
 the cherubims abide.
In Ephraim's and Benjamin's,
 and in Manasseh's sight,
O come for our salvation;
 stir up thy strength and might.

Turn us again, O Lord our God,
 and upon us vouchsafe
To make thy countenance to shine,
 and so we shall be safe.

Or take the beginning of Psalm LXXXIV.:—

MILTON'S VERSION.

How lovely are thy dwellings fair,
 O Lord of Hosts! how dear
The *pleasant* tabernacles are
 Where thou dost dwell so near!
My soul doth long, and almost die,
 Thy courts, O Lord, to see;
My heart and flesh aloud do cry,
 O living God, for Thee.

There even the sparrow, *freed from wrong,*
 Hath found a place of *rest;*
The swallow there, to lay her young,
 Hath built her *brooding* nest;
Even *by* thy altars, Lord of Hosts,
 They find their safe abode,
And hence they fly from round the coasts
 Toward thee, my King, my God.

ROUS'S VERSION : ED. 1646.

How dear thy tents are, Lord of Hosts!
  My soul longs vehemently
For God's courts; for the living God
  my heart and flesh do cry.
Sparrows an house, swallows a nest,
  found where they forth might bring
Their young; thine altars, Lord of Hosts,
  O thou, my God, my King.

SCOTTISH AUTHORIZED VERSION.

How lovely is thy dwelling-place,
  O Lord of Hosts, to me!
The tabernacles of thy grace,
  how pleasant, Lord, they be!
My thirsty soul longs vehemently,
  yea faints, thy courts to see;
My very heart and flesh cry out,
  O living God, for thee.

Behold, the sparrow findeth out
  an house wherein to rest;
The swallow also for herself
  hath purchasèd a nest;
Even thine own altars, where she safe
  her young ones forth may bring,
O thou Almighty Lord of Hosts,
  who art my God and King." [1]

Psalms I.—VIII. : Done into Verse.

(Edition of 1673.)

The former experiment of a close translation of Nine of the Psalms into ordinary Service metre had been made by Milton in April 1648, when he was living in High Holborn, not yet blind, and (Charles I. being still alive) not yet Latin Secretary to the

[1] For an interesting account of competing English Versions of the Psalms in the middle of the seventeenth century see Mr. David Laing's "Notices regarding the Metrical Versions of the Psalms received by the Church of Scotland," printed in the Appendix to his edition of Baillie's Letters and Journals (1842).

Commonwealth, nor with any prospect of being such. More than five years had elapsed since then, and Milton was living in Petty France, quite blind, and occupied with the duties of his Secretaryship, when something led him to recur to Psalm-translation. On a few successive days of August 1653 he dictated metrical versions of the first Eight of the Psalms. These versions, however, were done on a new principle. They did not profess to be close to the original, nor were they in the ordinary Service metre. On the contrary, very various metres were employed, some of them quite uncommon; and no two of the Eight Psalms were rendered in the same metre. Perhaps the main intention was to try the effect of such a freedom of metre. Little else, at all events, needs to be pointed out in connexion with this small exercise of Milton's. In his edition of 1673 he places it before his Versions of Psalms LXXX.—LXXXVIII.; but the chronological order of the Translations ought to be observed now, rather than the numerical order of the Psalms translated.

Scraps of Translated Verse from the Prose Writings.

It was Milton's laudable habit, and one rather unusual in his day, not to trouble the readers of his English pamphlets and other writings with quotations in Latin and Greek, but, where he did have occasion to quote a Latin or Greek author, either to give the English sense of the passage, or to annex the English sense to the quoted bit of Latin or Greek. So with Italian. Hence, when he wanted to quote a line or two from a Latin, Greek, or Italian poet, or a passage of Latin verse occurring in a prose author, he generally took the trouble to translate it offhand himself at the moment. In such cases blank verse came easiest, and all the scraps of the kind in his prose writings are in blank verse. He did not think it worth while to collect these for either the first or the second edition of his Poems; but they have very properly been sought out and placed in later editions. In Pickering's Edition of Milton's whole Works in 1851, indeed, there was a blunder by excess in this direction. In that edition, besides the original Latin of Milton's *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano contra Salmasium*, there was published an English version of the

same, done by a Mr. Washington of the Temple, and published in 1692. In this English version some scraps of Latin and Greek verse, occurring in the original, and among them a Latin Epigram on Salmasius by Milton himself, are translated into English rhymes. So far good; it was very proper for Mr. Washington to translate the scraps. But unfortunately these very scraps of English rhyme, done by Mr. Washington eighteen years after Milton was dead, are given as Milton's own, among his English Poems in another volume of the same edition. The blunder must have arisen from the fact that the English version of the *Defensio* was given with no indication of its authorship, so that the compiler of the edition, going over Milton's English writings for his translated scraps of verse, included the translation of the *Defensio* among those writings. In the present edition only the scraps that came from Milton's own pen are retained. It will be sufficient introduction to each individually to put over it a reference to the place of the original passage and the title of the pamphlet or other writing of Milton where the translation occurs.

INTRODUCTIONS TO THE POEMS SEVERALLY.

PART II.

THE LATIN POEMS.

BOTH in the Edition of 1645 and in that of 1673 the Latin and Greek Poems come after the English in a little mass by themselves, separately paged, and with a distinct title-page and other prefatory matter. In the earlier edition they fill (the prefatory matter not counted) 77 pages, while the English Poems fill 120 pages; *i.e.* in that edition the bulk of the Latin and Greek portion is nearly two-thirds that of the English. In the later edition the proportion of the Latin and Greek is somewhat less, there being 84 pages of Latin and Greek Verse after 165 of English; *i.e.* the English is nearly twice as much as the Latin and Greek. This change of proportion is rather symptomatic.

Although, long before Milton's birth, the vernacular had asserted itself in England, beyond all rivalry, as the true language for poetry and all popular literature, Latin retaining its ground chiefly for the purposes of scholarship and speculation and for writings meant for a European constituency, yet there lingered, to an extent which it is difficult now to fancy, a habit of Latin metrical composition. Nay, not of Latin metrical composition merely, but of genuine poetry in Latin. Among University men, in particular, this was the case. Not only was Latin the language of learning and of all systematic discussion; not only did men recollect in Latin, reason in Latin, fight in Latin, exerting their

minds to the utmost, and expressing the whole natural contents of their minds, whether massive or subtle, in the form of Latin prose: even for the play of phantasy, the lyrical utterance of feeling, and dramatic and humorous construction, the use of Latin was kept up. It was not that each man who had the use of Latin wrote what could be called accurate Latin or classical Latin; it was that each had a certain mastery of a Latin which was, at all events, his own Latin, and in which he could be coequal to himself in English, if not (and there were cases of this) superior to himself in English. A certain grammatical accuracy was, of course, looked for, and classical purity of Latin was a merit; but it was remembered that the ideas that had to be expressed were not ideas coeval with Cicero or Livy, and hence a writer was not always restricted to the classical vocabulary or the classical form of sentence, but had the run of mediæval words and the terms of Christian Theology, and might elbow out a syntax to suit. In Bacon's Latin prose, for example, Bacon had as good a right to be Bacon as Cicero, in his prose, had had to be Cicero. The Latin writings of Bacon were not regarded, and are not now to be regarded, as artificial exercises in a dead tongue; they were simply Bacon himself thinking, reasoning, inventing, exulting, and sometimes jesting, in one of two languages that were equally obedient to him. And so with the Latin Poetry of many Englishmen of Bacon's time and the next, and of times yet earlier—a body of Poetry which, if it were all collected, would surprise us by its bulk and its variety. There were elegies in Latin, epigrams in Latin, dramas in Latin, epics in Latin. Some stricter attention to pure or classic Latinity was generally expected in these things; but it would be a mistake to suppose that they were all merely mechanical exercises in an outworn tongue. They will be found, some of them at least, as good things as the same writers did, or were capable of doing, in English. I should say that this expectation of coequality between the intrinsic worth of the Latin poetry of any educated Englishman of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the intrinsic worth of the same writer's English poetry, if he wrote any, is the proper rule in the examination of any specimens of the forgotten Anglo-Latin Poetry of that period. It may be falsified in indi-

vidual cases of imperfect scholarship; but, as it is reasonable in itself—for, given only the adequate custom of Latin, why should a man leave aught of his brain behind him on passing into that speech?—so it will hold good in the main. It holds good, at all events, with respect to Milton's Latin poems. Some of them, if not most, are as remarkable, as Miltonic, as the minor English poems. For one thing, they entitle Milton, even apart from his Latin prose-pamphlets, to the credit of having been one of the finest, one of the most splendid, of British Latinists. Even for accuracy and pure classical elegance he would take a high rank among them all, though in these respects he may not quite come up to Buchanan and some others. But, in the higher respect of what he could make Latin do, of the amount of mind he could bring into Latin, and wheel into every possible evolution of itself in that element, he was, among the Latinists of his own time, nearly unmatched. This, in fact, is but saying that, as he was Milton and others were not, he could be Milton in Latin, while others could only be themselves. A comparison of Milton's Latin poems with the Latin poems of the best of his academic contemporaries would, I believe, bring out the exact kind and amount of difference which might thus be presumed from our knowledge of him and of them otherwise. Milton's Latin poems, I repeat, are as Miltonic, as worthy of being read, as his earlier English. There is perhaps, more of autobiographical matter in them; and this ought, in itself, to give them a special interest. But, merely as poetry, they ought still to be known. Milton is in them in every line—the same grace, the same felicity, the same richness, the same moral seriousness. There are thunders in them too, things here and there that astonish, and take away the breath. The more the pity now that, by the custom of his time, he was led to lock up so much of himself in a language accessible even then but to a minority of his countrymen, and which was to be familiar to fewer and fewer of them as time went on. Still, those that read Ovid and Virgil, Horace and Lucretius, might do worse than look into Milton's Latin poems too. They are factitious Latin, it is true, the Latin of an Englishman of the seventeenth century, and written chiefly in his youth. But then he was a greater man intrinsically than ever Ovid was, much as he admired that sweet and unfortunate

Roman, and there are things in his factitious Latin nobler than anything in Ovid's flowing vernacular.

What has to be specially observed, however, is that Milton more and more desisted from Latin verse as he advanced in life. It has already been noted (Introd. to Par. Lost, pp. 40–41) that, about the year 1640, when he was thirty-one years of age and had just returned from Italy, he came to a conclusion with himself upon this subject, resolving to take leave of Latin and to write the higher poems he was then contemplating in his own English. To this resolution he remained so far true that, though Latin accompanied him to the end of his life, though for eleven years he had to use it officially in his Foreign Secretaryship to the Commonwealth, and though in his pamphlets against Salmasius concerning the King's death he made Latin his instrument in order that all Europe might attend to the controversy, yet only one or two scraps of Latin verse were added after 1640 to the stock of his Latin pieces then already written. But more than this: even before 1640 Latin had been giving way to English in Milton's estimation for the purposes of poetry. His last considerable exercises in Latin verse at that date had been his *Ad Salsillum*, his *Mansus*, and his *Epitaphium Damonis*, all belonging to the previous year, 1639. But, with these exceptions—the two first easily accounted for, as they were written in Italy and addressed to Italians, but the last a really extraordinary exception, when we consider the deeply personal nature of the occasion—everything considerable that Milton had written in Latin verse had been written at least seven years before, and belongs properly to the Cambridge period of his life. Nay, if the reader will refer to the chronology of the Poems in the General Introduction, he will see that nearly all the Latin pieces of the Cambridge period were written in the Undergraduate portion of that period, or before Jan. 1628-9, when Milton took his B.A. degree. Till then, though he had written an occasional piece in English, academic influences had been so strong as to detain him more in Latin; but from that date, on through the rest of his Cambridge career, and more decidedly at Horton, we find his muse favouring her native speech. Now this earliness of the majority of Milton's Latin poems, their priority in the main to their English associates, has

to be remembered in reading them. Milton himself was careful that it should be remembered. He prefixed the dates, with some punctiliousness, to most of the Latin poems individually; and on the separate title-page to them in both his editions, of 1645 and 1673, he described them as "*Joannis Miltoni, Londinensis, Poemata: quorum pleraque intra annum ætatis vigesimum conscripsit*" ("Poems of John Milton, of London: most of them written before he was twenty years of age"). Quite consistently with what we have said of the general merits of the pieces, we may find this caution useful. A certain juvenility may be perceived in some of them, and occasionally a conventionalism of opinion about men and things which he would have afterwards repudiated. For example, he would not, in later life, have spoken of Bishop Andrewes with the same absolute respect as in his Elegy *In obitum Præsulis Wintoniensis*, nor of King James in such terms of conventional loyalty as are employed in the Gunpowder Plot poem, *In Quintum Novembris*. In all times, however, even the strongest and freest must begin by being, somehow, an undergraduate.

The Latin Poems were distinctly divided by Milton himself, in both editions, into two Books or sets—an "ELEGIARUM LIBER," or "BOOK OF ELEGIES;" and a "SYLVARUM LIBER," or BOOK OF SYLVÆ." The word *Sylva* (literally "a Wood") was the name given by the Latin authorcraft of the Empire, as we learn from Quintilian, to any rough thing written off at a heat; and hence the Miscellanies of many poets are printed in their works under the title of *Sylvæ*. The distinction made by Milton between his ELEGIÆ or ELEGIES and his SYLVÆ or MISCELLANIES seems to have been one of metrical form merely, and not of matter. Among the ELEGIES he put all pieces, of whatever kind, and whether properly "elegiac" or not in the sense of "pensive" or "mournful," that were written in the elegiac metre, of alternate Hexameters and Pentameters, so much used by Tibullus, Propertius, and his favourite Ovid. Among the SYLVÆ or MISCELLANIES, on the other hand, he put all pieces written in other kinds of verse, whether in Hexameters only, or in such more complex Horatian measures as Alcaics and varied Iambics. Later editors, indeed, have taken the liberty of cutting off a few

of the smaller pieces from the end of the Book of Elegies, and combining them with two or three scraps of Latin verse from the prose-pamphlets, so as to constitute a third brief Book, called EPIGRAMMATUM LIBER, or BOOK OF EPIGRAMS. But, though the few pieces thus thrown together are of the nature of Epigrams, and some of them like Martial's Epigrams, the liberty seems unwarrantable. Milton made the distinction into ELEGIES and SYLVÆ suffice, and we must do the same. Keeping, therefore, that division, but observing, as far as possible, the chronological order of the pieces within each set, we proceed to introduce the Latin Poems severally.

ELEGIARUM LIBER.

ELEGIA PRIMA:

Ad Carolum Diodatum.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

The person addressed in this Elegy was Charles Diodati, the dearest and most intimate friend of Milton in his boyhood, and through his youth and early manhood, and for whose memory he entertained a singular affection in still later life, after he had lost him by death. This is not the only recognition of this interesting person in Milton's remaining writings. Another of the Elegies is addressed to him; two of the Latin *Familiar Epistles* are addressed to him; he is Milton's confidant in the third of the Italian Sonnets; and he is the subject of the long Latin poem entitled *Epitaphium Damonis.* He will, therefore, be mentioned again in the course of these Introductions. At present we shall trace what is known of him as far as to the date of this Elegy, *i.e.* to the year 1626.

The family of Diodati (pronounce it Diodăti) was Italian, belonging originally to Lucca in the Tuscan States, but driven thence, apparently, on account of the Protestant opinions of its members. Of two brothers of the family, thus exiled from Italy by their Protestantism, one, named Giovanni Diodati, born in 1576, had become very eminent in Geneva, as a scholar and theo logian, and was Professor of Hebrew and one of the ministers of

that city. He was the author of various Calvinistic writings, much esteemed in their day by foreign Protestants and by the Puritans of England; he took a leading part in the famous Synod of Dort in 1618-19; and he would be yet remembered, if for nothing else, at all events for his Italian Version of the Scriptures, published in 1607, and known as "Diodati's Version." Altogether this Giovanni (or Jean) Diodati was an Italian-Genevese divine of so much consequence, from his appointment at a very early age to the Hebrew Professorship by Beza's recommendation, on to his death in 1649, that he retains a place to this day even in English Biographical Dictionaries. It is not there noted that he was the uncle of Milton's bosom-friend. Such, however, was the fact. For an elder brother of his, named Theodore Diodati, born in 1574, and educated for the medical profession, had made England his home, and, having married an English lady of some means, acquired a good practice and some celebrity as a physician. He is heard of (in Fuller's Worthies: Middlesex) as living, about the year 1609, near Brentford, in professional attendance on Prince Henry and the Princess Elizabeth, and as then performing an extraordinary cure, by immensely copious blood-letting, on one Tristram, a gardener; and there is a letter of his own describing this cure long afterwards, printed at the end of Hakewill's *Apology*, published in 1630. His more distinct career in the English medical world, however, may be dated from Jan. 1616-17, when he was admitted a Licentiate of the London College of Physicians, apparently on the faith of his having taken the regular degree of Doctor of Medicine at Leyden, Oct. 5, 1615 (Munk's Roll of the Royal College of Physicians, I. 160). From that time he seems to have resided in London, in the parish of Little St. Bartholomew, near Bartholomew's Hospital; which was certainly his place of residence at last. His practice was much among persons of rank, and took him sometimes into the country. I have seen a memorial of his in French in the State Paper Office, not dated, but probably of earlier date than 1624, applying to the King for the post of Physician to the Tower, and referring, for evidence of his fitness, to "Monsieur de Mayerne," the royal physician, afterwards Sir Theodore Mayerne. I have also ascertained that among his patients were Sir Robert Harley, K.B.,

afterwards member of the Long Parliament, and his wife Lady Brilliana Harley, sister of Lord Conway, and that he occasionally visited the Harleys professionally at their seat of Brampton-Bryan in Herefordshire. Nay, in the Ayscough MSS. in the British Museum, among memoranda of old physicians and medical practice, there is a document of sixteen pages, in a neat hand, containing copies of 173 favourite receipts or prescriptions of Dr. Diodati, some of them interesting as showing the extreme compositeness and whimsicality of the drugs of those days. Prescribing these and other drugs, and much respected in his profession, Dr. Diodati, whose foreign name was corrupted by his less educated or more slovenly neighbours into Deodate, Dyodat, and what not, lived on to a good old age. He was buried Feb. 12, 1650-1, in the church of Little St. Bartholomew.

Of two sons of this naturalized London physician, by his English wife, one was called Charles and the other Theodore. Milton knew both, but Charles was his especial friend. He was almost exactly of Milton's own age, or but a little older. He had been sent at a very early age to St. Paul's School, probably on account of its nearness to his father's house, and it was there that Milton had become acquainted with him. He was probably somewhat in advance of Milton in the classes, for he left school for Trinity College, Oxford, in Feb. 1621-2, three years before Milton left the same school for Cambridge. The separation was no interruption of their friendship. The young Oxonian and the young Cantab corresponded with each other, and in the University vacations they were much together in London, or in excursions in its neighbourhood. Probably because Diodati was destined for his father's profession of medicine, and was preparing for it, we do not hear much of his career at Oxford; but he was well liked in his college there, and there is a copy of Latin Alcaics by him in a volume of Oxford Verses put forth in 1624 on the death of the great scholar Camden. He seems, however, to have been fond of writing his letters in Greek; and two Greek letters of his to Milton have been strangely preserved, and are now in the British Museum. The first is headed Θεόδοτος Μίλτωνι εὐφραίνεσθαι ("Diodati to Milton, to cheer up"), and is in a very sprightly vein, as follows:—"The present disposition of the

" weather appears to be too jealous for what we agreed upon
" lately at parting, being now for two whole days stormy and
" unsettled ; but, for all that, so much do I long for your society
" that I am now dreaming of, and all but prophesying, fine
" weather, and calm, and everything golden, for to-morrow, that
" we may regale each other with the discourses of philosophers
" and learned men. Wherefore I resolved to write to you, for
" the purpose of inviting you forth and putting courage into you,
" being afraid that, in despair of sunshine and pleasantness, you
' may be turning your mind to something else. For the present,
" then, take courage, my friend, and abide by what I have
" arranged for both, and put on a festive frame of mind and one
" gayer than usual. For to-morrow all will go well, and air, and
" sun, and river, and trees, and birds, and men, will make holiday
" with us, and laugh with us, and, be it said without offence, dance
" with us. Only you be ready, either to start when I call for
" you, or, without being called, to come to me longing for you.
" Αὐτομάτος δὲ οἱ ἦλθε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος [Iliad, II. 408 : Came
" of his own accord then the bold-in-the-din Menelaus]. Fare-
" well." The letter is not dated, but was evidently written in some vacation-time when both the friends were in London : the long vacation of 1625 is as likely as any. On the 10th of December in that year Diodati took his B.A. degree; and soon after that, though his connexion with Oxford was not at an end, he went into Cheshire, either on a visit of pleasure, or possibly on some business relating to his intended profession of medicine. It was from this part of England, apparently, and in the summer of 1626, that he sent his second Greek letter to Milton. It is headed Θεοδοτος Μιλτωνι χαιρειν ("Diodati to Milton greeting"), and runs as follows :—"I have no fault to find with my present mode of life,
" except this one, that I lack some kindred spirit to converse with,
" and long for such a one. Otherwise all passes pleasantly here in
" the country ; for what else is wanting when the days are long,
" the scenery blooming with flowers and waving and teeming
" with leaves, on every branch a nightingale or goldfinch or other
" bird delighting with its songs and warblings, most varied walks,
" a table neither scant nor overloaded, and sleep undisturbed. If
" I had a good companion, I mean an educated one that would

" care for these things, I should be happier than the King of the " Persians. But something is always wanting in human affairs, " and there is need of moderation. But thou, wondrous youth, " why dost thou despise the gifts of nature; why dost thou per- " sist inexcusably in tying thyself night and day to books and " studies? Live, laugh, enjoy youth and the present; and give " over wearing yourself out with reading about the libations, and " leisures, and indolences of the sages of old. I, in all things else " your inferior, both think myself and am superior to you in this, " that I know a measure in my labours. Farewell, and be merry, " but not like Sardanapalus."

It is not solely because these letters throw light upon the character of Diodati and on his regard for Milton that they have been quoted here. It seems to me quite possible that in the second of these two missives we have that very letter of Diodati to which Milton's Latin Elegy now under consideration is an avowed reply. It is, at all events, a reply to *some* letter of Diodati's sent from near Chester, and which reached Milton in London. The interest of Milton's Elegy in reply is, to a large extent, autobiographical:—Milton writes that he is not so wholly given up to books and studies as Diodati supposes, but is having a pleasant time of it in London, happy among his books certainly, but with other enjoyments. Are there not the theatres, for example? And, earlier in the day, are there not the parks and public gardens, where one may walk, and see troops of beauties pass by—London's choicest fair ones, beating the fairest of all other lands and of all other times—with perhaps, in some group, one beauty so supremely ravishing that her form and her glance can never be forgotten? Most of the Elegy is in this strain; but there is one passage of particular moment to the commentators. It is that beginning line 9 and ending line 24. Milton is supposed to refer here (and the supposition seems inevitable) to a fact in his life of which there is other evidence—viz. a quarrel he had, in his undergraduateship, with the authorities of Christ's College, Cambridge, and his temporary retirement or rustication from the College in consequence. It is positively known that Milton, while he was an undergraduate at Christ's, had some disagreement with the tutor under whose charge he had been put at

the time of his first admission: viz. William Chappell, afterwards Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and Bishop of Cloyne and Ross; and it is farther known that, in consequence of this disagreement—in the course of which Dr. Thomas Bainbrigge, the Master of the College, may have been called in, or may have interfered—Milton was transferred from the tutorship of Chappell to that of another of the Fellows of the College: viz. Nathaniel Tovey, afterwards parson of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. The probable date of this incident (which was magnified by Dr. Johnson, rather unnecessarily, on the faith of a mere MS. jotting of the old gossip, Aubrey, into the well-known, but disagreeable, myth of Milton's disgrace at Cambridge by corporal punishment) was the Lent or Easter term of Milton's second academic year, *i.e.* of the year 1625-6. The present Elegy was probably written during Milton's absence or rustication from College that summer; and in the passage indicated he speaks of this absence or rustication (*exilium* is the word he uses) as not such a bad thing after all. Is he not again in his father's house, with all its comforts? Is he not master of his own time and of his own movements? Is he not in busy and liberal London, away from dull Cambridge, with its reedy river, and its shadeless fields, and out of the range of the sour looks of Chappell, the threats (*minas*) of Bainbrigge, and other indignities not to be borne by a temper like his (*cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo*)? If this be exile, may he never have a worse! Nevertheless, as he says in the end of the Elegy, it *is* arranged that he shall return to Cambridge. Actually, as we know, he did return, to finish his undergraduate course, under Tovey's tutorship. His temporary absence, we also know, counted for nothing against him; for he did not lose a term, but took his B.A. degree at exactly the proper time.

Elegia Secunda.

Anno ætatis 17.

In obitum Præconis Academici Cantabrigiensis.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

"*On the death of the Cambridge University Bedel*" is the translation of the heading of this Elegy; and a few words will suffice to

explain both the heading and the Elegy itself:—*Beadle* (otherwise *Bedel*) is, as all know, the name for that officer of a Court, or other body, who delivers its messages, or cites persons to appear before it. The word, in old English, meant "a crier," from the word "bid" (to cry, or publish); and hence the Latin equivalent is "*Præco*" (herald or crier), though "*Viator*" (messenger) was an alternative name. Now, the English Universities have officers called *Esquire Bedels*, who carry the mace before the Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor on public occasions, attend at other solemnities, collect fines, summon to meetings, &c. These Esquire Bedels, of whom there are three at Cambridge, have an inferior Bedel under them, who is called the Yeoman-Bedel. The Bedelship is a life-office, and the Senior Esquire Bedel is usually a venerable man of some note in the University, acquainted with its forms, and full of its anecdotes. Such a man seems to have been Richard Ridding, M.A. of St. John's, who was Senior Esquire Bedel when Milton went to Cambridge. Through two University sessions Milton had been familiar with his venerable figure; but about the beginning of Milton's third University session (1626-7) Ridding died. I have not ascertained the exact day, but the probate of his will is dated Nov. 8, 1626. The death of a University personage so conspicuous naturally gave occasion for versifying; and Milton's Elegy was one of the results. It ought to be noted that Milton's own dating of the Elegy "*Anno ætatis* 17" is either wrong by a year, or must be translated laxly as meaning "at seventeen years of age." Milton was close on the end of his eighteenth year, but could still call himself "seventeen years of age," when Ridding died.

Elegia Tertia.

Anno ætatis 17.

In obitum Præsulis Wintoniensis.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

On the 21st of September 1626, just before the beginning of Milton's third academic year at Cambridge, there died, at Winchester House, Southwark, the learned and eloquent Dr. Lancelot

Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, at the age of seventy-one. Milton's ecclesiastical opinions in his later life led him to be rather critical in his estimate of this famous Bishop, and indeed of Bishops generally; but in his Cambridge undergraduateship his anti-prelatic feelings were less pronounced, and he willingly joined in the chorus of regret over the loss of one of the brightest intellects in the English Church. Moreover, Bishop Andrewes was a Cambridge man, educated at Pembroke Hall, and had been Master of that College before he had been made a Bishop. Cambridge was bound to celebrate him in Elegies. The reader of Milton's ought to note the historical allusions which it contains. The year of Bishop Andrewes's death had been one of great mortality by the Plague in England and of the deaths of several men of note abroad. Here again (see Introd. to *Elegia Secunda*) we must translate the heading "*Anno ætatis* 17" as meaning not "in his seventeenth year," but "at seventeen years of age."

Elegia Quarta.

Anno ætatis 18.

Ad Thomam Junium, præceptorem suum, apud mercatores Anglicos Hamburgæ agentes Pastoris munere fungentem.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

In this Elegy, written in 1627, or in Milton's third year at Cambridge, we are introduced to another interesting person with whom the poet had close personal relations: viz. Thomas Young, who had been his preceptor in his childhood, but had now been for some time in Hamburg, in the post of chaplain or minister to the English merchants of that city.

Thomas Young was a Scotchman. He was born at Luncarty in Perthshire in or about 1588, was educated at the University of St. Andrews, and took his M.A. degree there. Perhaps because the accession of James to the English throne in 1603 had opened up for many Scots prospects of a better livelihood in England than their own country afforded, Young had migrated thither while still a young man; and there are indistinct traces of him in the capacity of curate or assistant to Puritan parish-ministers in

London and its neighbourhood before 1618. He seems, however, to have employed himself chiefly in teaching; and, in the course of that employment, it was his good fortune to happen upon one pupil who was to be immortal. It cannot be determined with certainty whether Milton had been boarded under Young's charge somewhere near London before he went to St. Paul's School, or whether Young had only been his first domestic preceptor, and had continued to be his private preceptor while he was at St. Paul's School, coming daily to his father's house in Bread Street, Cheapside, close to the School, and adding to the education which he was receiving from Mr. Alexander Gill, the head master of the School, and his son and assistant, Mr. Alexander Gill the younger. The latter, perhaps, is the more probable supposition. In that case, however, Young's tutorship of Milton did not extend over the whole period of his training under the two Gills. Milton, so far as is known, went to St. Paul's School in 1620, when he was eleven years of age, and he remained there till the winter or spring of 1624-5, when he left for Cambridge at the age of sixteen. But Young had left England for his chaplaincy to the English merchants at Hamburg at least as early as 1622. He was then a married man, with children, and matters had not been so prosperous with him in England but that a foreign chaplaincy was acceptable. Many English and Scottish ministers, especially of Puritan opinions, were then scattered through the towns of Holland and adjacent countries, as pastors of the little congregations of British colonists there; and the chaplaincy of the wealthy German city of Hamburg may have been one of the best.

Milton, it appears, had cherished a warm recollection of Young in his exile, and occasional communications had passed between them. The first of Milton's Latin *Familiar Epistles* is addressed to Young (*Thomæ Junio, præceptori suo*). It is dated "London, March 26, 1625," and was written, therefore, after Milton had been admitted at Christ's College, Cambridge, but before his residence at Cambridge had fairly commenced. It is expressed in terms of the most ardent affection and gratitude, with apologies for having been remiss in his correspondence, and especially for having allowed three years to elapse since his last letter; and

there is an acknowledgment also of the gift of a Hebrew Bible which Young had sent to him. Two years more had passed since that Epistle was written, and Milton had again been remiss. The present Elegy is his atonement. He takes shame to himself for his long silence, but assures Young that he never has been and never can be forgotten. The messages of affection and respect conveyed are quite enthusiastic, with a tone of tenderness in them which wins from the reader a real liking for Young, and a conviction that he must have been a man of no ordinary merit. It is distinctly intimated (lines 19—32) that Milton owed to Young his first literary impulses, his first lessons and tastes in classic literature and poetry. It seems also to be conveyed (lines 33—38) that Young's tutorship of him had lasted between two and three years. Why, the Elegy asks, had he been so infrequent in his messages of duty to one to whom he owed so much? Let the Elegy itself make his excuses at Hamburg. It will find the good and learned man there, kind as he always was, sitting beside his sweet wife, or dandling his children on his knee, or perhaps turning over large volumes of the Fathers, or reading God's own Bible. But what news is this that one is hearing from Hamburg? The great Continental war, known afterwards as *The Thirty Years' War*, was then in its second stage, when Christian IV. of Denmark was the leader of the Protestant Alliance against the Imperialists under Tilly and Wallenstein. Saxony, to which Hamburg was attached, was inextricably involved; and actually, while Milton wrote, the rumour was that the Imperialist soldiery were all round Hamburg and threatening it with siege. What might befall poor Young and his family? On this cause of alarm Milton dilates, not without a touch of anger at the stupidity and cold-heartedness of Britain, which had driven such a man as Young abroad for bare subsistence, to live poorly and obscurely amid strangers, when he might have been a noted minister of the Gospel at home. But he bids Young take courage. God will protect him through all the dangers of war; nay more (and with this prediction the Elegy closes), better times are in store for him, and he will not remain much longer in exile.

"Nec dubites quandoque frui melioribus annis,
Atque iterum patrios posse videre lares."

Milton's prediction was very speedily fulfilled. Not many months after Young had received the Elegy, he returned to England; and on the 27th of March 1628, being then about forty years of age, he was inducted into the united Vicarages of St. Peter and St. Mary in Stowmarket, Suffolk. The living was a good one, and he is said to have been indebted for it to the influence of a Mr. John Howe, of Stowmarket, one of a wealthy family of cloth-manufacturers. He had not been four months in his Vicarage at Stowmarket at the date of a second letter to him from Milton, preserved among the Latin *Familiar Epistles*. It is dated "Cambridge, July 21, 1628," and shows that Milton and he must again have come together since his return to England. Young had invited Milton to come and see him at Stowmarket, and Milton accepts the invitation and promises to come soon. Accordingly, the tradition at Stowmarket to this day is that Milton was a frequent visitor to Young during his incumbency; and they point out, if not the room which he occupied in the Vicarage, at least the old mulberry-tree in the garden which they will have it that he planted, and which we may grant that he may have seen.

Young's incumbency at Stowmarket lasted all the rest of his life. But he was destined to a wider celebrity than attached merely to that incumbency. As he was of strict Puritan principles, it is difficult to imagine how he continued to tide through the time of the Laudian supremacy in the Church and State (1628—1640), during which Laud and his subordinate diocesans were so zealous in calling to account parish ministers of too Calvinistic doctrine, or too Puritanical in their dislike of vestments and ceremonies. Luck or prudence did carry him through, however; so that, at the close of Laud's supremacy, and the beginning of a new era for England with the Long Parliament (Nov. 1640), he was still Vicar of Stowmarket. During the two preceding years he had been sympathising with his fellow-countrymen, the Scots, in their Covenant, and their struggles against Laud and Charles; and in 1639 he had published a treatise in Latin entitled *Dies Dominica*, and consisting of a defence of the Puritan idea of the Sabbath-day and its proper observance. He had published this treatise all but anonymously, signing himself, in the preface,

only *Theophilus Philo-Kuriaces Loncardiensis;* which may be made out now to mean "Theophilus Church-lover (or Lover of the Lord's Day), native of Luncarty," but which cannot have been very intelligible then. He was probably known as the author, however, and otherwise distinguished among the Puritan parish clergy; for, after the meeting of the Long Parliament, he is found coming decidedly to the front among the advocates of a radical Church Reform. In conjunction with four other parish ministers of noted Puritan principles—viz. Stephen Marshal, Edmund Calamy, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow—he wrote the famous Smectymnuan Pamphlet, or Treatise by SMECTYMNUUS (a grotesque fancy-name composed of the initials of the five writers), in reply to Bishop Joseph Hall's defences of Episcopacy and of the English Liturgy. Of this Smectymnuan treatise, which was published in 1641, and was the first loud manifesto of Anti-Episcopal opinions within the Church itself, Young, it is now known, was the principal author. As Hall replied, and the Smectymnuans replied again, the controversy prolonged itself through a series of pamphlets, all now regarded as belonging to the Smectymnuan set, and two of which ("*Animadversions on the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnuus,*" and "*An Apology against a Pamphlet called a Modest Confutation of the Animadversions*") were from Milton's own pen. He had been in Young's confidence from the beginning of the controversy, and had thought it right at last to plunge in personally to the rescue of Young and his brother Smectymnuans.

It is doubtful whether the cordial intimacy between Milton and Young which this co-operation indicates lasted much beyond those years, 1641–42, when the Smectymnuan controversy raged. Milton's subsequent Divorce Speculations, and his rupture with the Presbyterians, may have interfered with their intimacy, though not with their mutual regard. For Young was one of the divines of the Westminster Assembly, and went wholly with the great majority of that body in their aims towards the establishment in England of a strict Presbyterian system like that of Scotland. By this time he was so conspicuous a person that the Scots remembered he was their countryman, and would fain have induced him to return to Scotland by the offer of some suitable

post. But England could outbid Scotland for him, and retained him to the end. In 1644, when the University of Cambridge was visited by Parliamentary authority and refractory Heads of Houses and Fellows were turned out, and their places filled with new men, Young was appointed to the Mastership of Jesus College, in place of the ultra-Royalist and Laudian Dr. Richard Sterne. On the 12th of April in that year he was incorporated in the University *ad eundem*,—*i.e.* to the same degree of M.A. which he had taken at St. Andrews nearly forty years before. On the 28th of February 1644-5 he preached a Fast-day Sermon before the House of Commons, which was published under the title of *Hope's Encouragement.* He lived for ten years longer, holding his Mastership of Jesus College in conjunction with his Vicarship of Stowmarket, and honoured as D.D. and otherwise. He died in 1655 at Stowmarket, at the age of about sixty-seven, and was there buried. A portrait of him, which was kept in the Vicarage, is still extant, and I have seen a photograph from it, exhibiting, through the blur of age that had come over the original, a really powerful, calm, and well-featured face.[1]

Elegia Quinta.

Anno ætatis 20.

In Adventum Veris.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This Elegy is of a general poetic nature, and requires little introduction. It is dated by Milton "*Anno ætatis* 20;" which, according to his habit (see Introductions to *Elegia Secunda* and *Elegia Tertia*), has to be translated "At twenty years of age." The Elegy, therefore, may be referred to the early part of 1629, when Milton had just taken his B.A. degree at Cambridge. Bachelor-like, he exults in the arrival of Spring, hailing the glad season of Nature's renewal in a poem which may be described

[1] I owe the sight of this photograph to Mr. David Laing, of the Signet Library, Edinburgh; who, while I write, is about to add to his already numerous publications, so richly- and accurately illustrative of Scottish and English History, a special memoir of Milton's preceptor, Thomas Young.

as a laborious Latin amplification of the sentiment of Tennyson's lines:—

> "In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
> In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."

ELEGIA SEXTA.

Ad Carolum Diodatum, ruri commorantem.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

Of the above heading there is this extension in the original: "*qui, cum Idibus Decemb. scripsisset, et sua carmina excusari postulasset si solito minus essent bona, quod inter lautitias quibus erat ab amicis exceptus haud satis felicem operam Musis dare se posse affirmabat, hunc habuit responsum.*" That is to say, the Elegy was an epistle sent by Milton to his friend Charles Diodati, in reply to a metrical letter from Diodati, dated the Ides of December, in which Diodati, then staying in the country, had asked Milton to excuse his verses if they were not so good as usual, on the ground that the friends among whom he was staying were treating him so hospitably that he had no leisure for careful composition. Though the exact day of Diodati's letter is here given, the *year* is not. It was, however, the year 1629. Diodati's letter was dated the 13th of December 1629, and Milton's Elegy in reply was written about Christmas in that year.

The life of Diodati, and the history of Milton's friendship with him, as far as to the year 1626, have been sketched in the Introduction to the *Elegia Prima*. Three years had elapsed since then, and the two friends had been pursuing their separate courses—Diodati with the medical profession in prospect, but retaining his connexion with Oxford, where he graduated M.A. in July 1628, and Milton persevering at Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. in Jan. 1628-9. But their friendship was firm as ever, and they may have had meetings in the interval. One such meeting, of more than ordinary interest to both, may have been at Cambridge in July 1629; for I find that Diodati, though then an Oxford M.A. of but one year's standing, was incorporated *ad eundem* at Cambridge in the July Commencement of that year. So early an

incorporation of an Oxonian in the sister University was unusual, and I seem to see in the fact an arrangement between the two friends.

The heading of the Elegy tells the rest. The sprightly, quick-witted Italian had gone again into the country, either to the neighbourhood of Chester, as on the occasion of the First Elegy, or to some other part of England. There, in some pleasant country-mansion, and among pleasant and hospitable friends, he is having a delightful winter holiday. It is but the 13th of December, but they are making Christmas of it already—good cheer, blazing fires, wine, music, dancing, games of forfeits, &c. So Diodati informs Milton, pleading these festivities in excuse for neglect of Poetry. The reply is very characteristic. After messages of affection, Milton playfully objects to Diodati's excuse, and maintains that festivity and poetry, Bacchus and Song, Venus and Song, are naturally kin and always have gone together. Suddenly, however, in this vein he checks himself. What he has said is true, he explains, only of certain kinds of poetry, and certain orders of poets. For the greatest poetry there must be a different regimen. For those who would speak of high matters, the deeds of heroes and the counsels of the gods, for those whose poetry would rise to the prophetic strain, not wine and conviviality were fitted, but spare Pythagorean diet, the beechen bowl of pure water, a life even ascetic in its abstinence, and scrupulously pure. This is an eminently Miltonic idea, perhaps *pre*-eminently *the* Miltonic idea ; and it occurs again and again in Milton's writings. Nowhere, however, is it more finely expressed than in the passage in this Elegy beginning "*At qui bella refert*" and ending "*ora Jovem*" (lines 55—78). These twenty-four lines are about Milton's noblest in Latin, and deserve to be learnt by heart with reference to himself, or to be written under his portrait. They give a value to the whole Elegy. The lines that follow them, however (79—90), have also a peculiar interest. They inform us that, at the very time when Milton was writing this Elegy to Diodati, he was engaged on his English Ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." He had begun it, he says, on Christmas-day, and he promises to show it to Diodati. As the Ode, in its place among the English Poems in Milton's First Edition, is dated "1629," this fixes the date o the Elegy.

Elegia Septima.

Anno ætatis undevigesimo.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This Elegy, which is the last of any length in the Book, and the last to which Milton attached a number, is out of its proper chronological place. "*Anno ætatis undevigesimo*" ("in his nineteenth year") is the dating; and, as Milton here uses the numeral adjective, and not, as in other cases, the Arabic figures for the number, it is perhaps to be understood exactly—*i.e.* as implying that the Elegy was written between Dec. 9, 1626, and Dec. 9, 1627. Possibly, however, even with the use of the numeral adjective, Milton gives himself the benefit of a year, and means "at nineteen years of age," or between Dec. 9, 1627, and Dec. 9, 1628. In either case the precise month is fixed by the Elegy itself as May. The date therefore is either May 1627 or May 1628. Either way the Elegy ought to have come before the two that precede it in the present arrangement. A reason, however, may be detected for its being placed last in the series of numbered pieces.

The Elegy is more decidedly and thoroughly a love-poem than any of the others. In the First Elegy, *Ad Carolum Diodatum*, there is a gallant mention of the London beauties to be seen in the parks and public gardens; and in a part of the Fifth, *In Adventum Veris*, there is a poetical recognition of Cupid's activity as one of the phenomena of Spring. But the present Elegy is a love-confession throughout, and quite precise and personal. In reading it we are reminded of the myth which tells how, as young Milton one day lay asleep under a tree, a foreign lady passing the spot was so struck with his beauty that she wrote some Italian lines in pencil and placed them in his hand, the perusal of which, when he awoke, begot in him such a passion for the fair unknown that he sought her afterwards through the world as his Lost Paradise. Not that the Elegy gives any authenticity to the myth; which, in fact, does not belong to Milton's life alone, but occurs in the lives of other poets. But the Elegy tells a story of a casual encounter with a lovely fair one which did

actually befall Milton, not while he was asleep, but when he was wide awake, and not in a wood, but in some public place in London. It was May time, we are told, and Cupid had sworn to be revenged on Milton for his contempt of love and his boasts of being heart-whole. Fifty lines are taken up in telling this and describing the little love-god and his threats. Then, at line 51, the real story begins. Forgetting all about the love-god, he takes his walks, as usual, now in those parts of the town where the citizens promenade (*qua nostri spatiantur in urbe Quirites* is the phrase, and the last word seems to imply London, rather than Cambridge), and now in the neighbouring country, with its hamlets and villas. He observes, in the streets more especially, the crowd of beauties, perfect goddesses, that pass and repass. He indulges in the sight, as often before, pleased, but little thinking what was to come of it this time. For alas! one fair one, supereminent above all, caught his glance, and the wound was fatal. It was but the sight of a moment, for she was gone, never again to be seen on earth; but her face and her form were to remain with him a vision for ever. No longer now is he heart-whole, for he goes about sweetly miserable. Cupid has had his revenge, and he acknowledges now that little god's power. Oh, if ever he and such a fair one should meet again, might one arrow transfix both their hearts!

A peculiar circumstance about this Elegy is that it is followed by a Postscript. For the ten lines, beginning "*Hæc ego*" and ending "*ipsa Venus*," which I have caused to be printed in italics in the present edition, are not, as might be supposed, an epilogue to the whole series of Seven Elegies preceding them. This might be supposed, at first sight, from the fact that in Milton's own editions there is a black line or score across the page, separating the ten lines in question from the end of the Seventh Elegy; and the supposition is almost forced on the reader by the practice of most modern editors. They not only retain the score, but they detach into a separate Book, under the name of *Epigrams*, the few short pieces of an epigrammatic kind which followed the ten lines in Milton's editions as still belonging to the *Elegiarum Liber*. This makes the *Elegiarum Liber* consist of the seven numbered Elegies, and causes the ten unheaded lines at the end

of the Seventh to come at the close of the Book and seem like a winding-up of the whole. But, as we have said (*antè*, p. 322), though Milton gives prominence to the first seven pieces of the Book of Elegies by numbering them, he does not, in his own editions, end the Book with the Seventh Elegy. He adds the scraps of Epigram in elegiac verse, and only at the end of these scraps does he finish the Book by appending the words "*Elegiarum Finis.*" This diminishes the probability that the Ten Lines are meant as an Epilogue to the whole series of the numbered Elegies, and makes it likelier that they are a Postscript only to the Seventh Elegy, the last of the numbered ones. And the meaning of the lines themselves turns the likelihood, I think, into a certainty. Let us translate them rather literally. "Such vain "trophies of my idleness did I long ago set up in silly mood and "with careless pains. It was at a time, be sure, when unfortunate "error held me in its whirl, and my indocile age was a bad "mistress, until the shady Academy (by *Academia* Milton here "means not the University, but Plato's philosophy) opened its "Socratic streams to me, and untaught the yoke to which I "had submitted. From that time forward, flames having been "extinguished in us, our breast is stiff with accumulated ice; "whence the Boy himself fears freezing for his arrows, and Venus "herself dreads our Diomedean force." Now, in no mood of sternness in later life could this conclusion be applicable to all the seven numbered Elegies, or to most of them. There were some of them of which, juvenile though they were, he could still approve in his manhood. But, in 1645, when he looked over those pieces before giving them to the printer for Moseley's volume, that love-confession of the Seventh Elegy delayed him. He thought it maudlin: perhaps he remembered the exact incident and its circumstantials with half a blush. Ought he to print the thing? His hesitation to do so accounts perhaps for its coming out of its proper chronological place; but at last he lets it go, only adding the Postscript of recantation. That Postscript, therefore, has to be dated 1645, or eighteen years after the Elegy to which it is attached. Yet, though attached specially to that Elegy, it separates conveniently the seven numbered Elegies from the scraps of Epigram that follow in the same Book.

EPIGRAMS.

"IN PRODITIONEM BOMBARDICAM and IN INVENTOREM BOMBARDÆ" (editions of 1645 and 1673).—The anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot seems to have been a regular occasion for versifying in Schools and Colleges. Among the Sylvæ there is a long poem in Hexameters by Milton on this subject, entitled *In Quintum Novembris;* and the four little pieces on the same subject among the Elegies may have been Milton's easier tributes to University custom on some one, or on several, of the Fifths of November of his Cambridge undergraduateship. They express rather wittily the popular Protestant horror of Guy Fawkes and his attempt. The fifth piece, not on the Gunpowder Treason, but on the Inventor of Gunpowder, is but a variation of the general theme; and the five together may be called the Gunpowder Group.

"AD LEONORAM ROMÆ CANENTEM" (editions of 1645 and 1673).—These three pieces must have been written at Rome in one or other of Milton's two terms of residence in that city during his Italian tour. His first visit, in October and November 1638, is the more likely time. An incident of that visit, recorded by Milton himself in one of his Familiar Epistles (*Lucæ Holstenio, Romæ, in Vaticano*), was his presence at a magnificent musical entertainment given by Cardinal Francesco Barberini in his palace. All the *élite* of Rome were present at this concert; but the courteous cardinal, receiving the crowding guests at the doors, had singled out the English stranger, and welcomed him with special attention. To Milton, with his love of music, this concert may have been an unusual pleasure, especially if it was there that he heard the singer Leonora to whom the present pieces are addressed. There or elsewhere in Rome he did hear that paragon of voices. For, throughout the world, or at all events the musical and Italian world, there was no singer then so renowned as Leonora Baroni. There is an article on her in Bayle's Dictionary, the substance of which, apart from minuter information in the notes, runs thus: "BARONI, LEONORA, an "Italian lady, one of the finest voices of the world, flourished in "the seventeenth century. She was the daughter of the beautiful

"ADRIANA, a Mantuan, and was so admired that an infinity of "*beaux esprits* made verses in her praise. There is a volume of "excellent pieces, in Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Spanish, "printed at Rome under the title of '*Applausi Poetici alle glorie* "*della Signora Leonora Baroni.*'" I have tried, in vain, to see this volume mentioned by Bayle, thinking it just possible that Milton's three pieces in Leonora's praise might be included in it. But, indeed, there are scattered testimonies to her divine singing in various books of her time, and Milton's pieces may not be in the volume of *Applausi.* Certainly she had no greater admirer than he, and his praises of her are thoroughly in earnest. One notices a tone of respect in them too, which accords with all that we otherwise know of Leonora. She went about usually with her mother, the beautiful Adriana Baroni, and a sister called Katarina. All three were highly accomplished in other things than music; Leonora, though the matchless singer, was not so handsome as her mother had been; sometimes she accompanied herself, but more frequently her mother accompanied her, on the lute or theorbo, and sometimes her sister on the harp. Though Bayle makes the family Mantuan, it was originally Neapolitan, and had migrated from Naples to Mantua. From 1637 onwards, however, Rome was the head-quarters of the fascinating three.

"APOLOGUS DE RUSTICO ET HERO" (edition of 1673).—There is nothing to date this Apologue, except that its non-appearance in the edition of 1645 suggests that it was written after that year. Indeed there is a touch of political significance in it, belonging to a time when Milton's thoughts had become steeped in politics.

DE MORO.—So we may entitle the bit of shabby lampoon on Milton's antagonist *Morus*, or Alexander More, which appeared first in Milton's *Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano* (1654), and was reproduced in his *Pro se Defensio contra Alexandrum Morum* (1655). More was a Frenchman, of Scottish parentage, born in 1616, who, after a varied career of celebrity as a Protestant preacher and Professor of Greek and of Theology in various parts of the Continent—at Geneva, in Holland, and again in France—died in Paris in 1670, four years before Milton. His collision with Milton dates from the year 1652, when he caused to be printed, at the Hague, a treatise against the English Commonwealth

entitled "*Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cœlum adversus Parricidas Anglicanos*" ("Cry of the King's Blood to Heaven against the English Parricides"). In this treatise Milton was attacked for his Defences of the Regicide; and, though it was anonymous, and was really not by More, but by Peter du Moulin the younger, Milton made More responsible. In his *Defensio Secunda* and in his *Pro se Defensio* he dragged More through a perfect ditch of invective, publishing all sorts of scandals against More's private character, which had come to him from correspondents in Geneva and elsewhere. The distich under notice is one of these unsavoury scandals embalmed in a Latin pun on More's name. The only reason for including it among Milton's Poems and in the *Elegiarum Liber* is that it is certainly Milton's and is in elegiac verse.

AD CHRISTINAM, SUECORUM REGINAM, NOMINE CROMWELLI. —The lines printed with this title in most modern editions of Milton's Poems are supposed to have been written for Cromwell in 1654, the first year of his Protectorate, to accompany a portrait of himself which he then sent to Christina, Queen of Sweden. Being in elegiac verse, they have their proper place here in the *Elegiarum Liber*, if they are Milton's. But *are* they Milton's? The point requires a little discussion.

Queen Christina of Sweden is one of the most erratic figures of the seventeenth century. The daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus, born December 8, 1626, she succeeded to the Swedish throne on that hero's death in 1632, when she was but six years of age. Her education, begun by her father on the principle of training her up to be an Amazon, fit to act a man's part or more in war and politics, was continued during her minority on the same principle, under the care of Chancellor Oxenstiern and his associates in the Regency. Europe heard of the young Swedish queen as a prodigy, learned in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and various modern languages, accustomed to warlike exercises and reviewing troops on horseback, deep also in statecraft, and with an undisguised scorn for the pursuits, the society, and even the dress of her own sex. At length, in 1644, when she was eighteen years of age, she assumed the active government of Sweden. She finished a war with Denmark, and took part in the negotiations

which closed the *Thirty Years' War* in the Peace of Westphalia (1648). By the terms of this Peace, Sweden received an accession of territory, and retained in Europe something of that political importance which had been won for her by the wars of Gustavus. At the head of this kingdom, and refusing all offers of marriage, Christina was for some years a wonder and a puzzle to all neighbouring states. Her passion, when peace had succeeded war, was for the patronage of artists, philosophers, and men of letters, and the attraction to her Court of celebrities of these kinds from all parts of Europe. Germans and Frenchmen, famous for this or that, were found at her Court, quarrelling with each other and intriguing for her favour. The great French scholar, Salmasius, or Claude de Saumaise, was one of these visitors to Christina, drawn to Sweden, by her special invitation, in 1650, just after the publication of his *Defensio Regia pro Carolo*, or Defence of Charles I. and attack on the English Commonwealth. But Milton's triumphant reply to this treatise in his *Defensio Prima pro Populo Anglicano* (1651) is said to have followed Salmasius into Sweden, and to have been read by Christina with such liking and conviction that Salmasius was thrown into eclipse with her, so that in 1651 he departed from her Court quite crestfallen. Certain it is that from that year onwards there was a show of cordial relations between Sweden and the English Commonwealth. Thus, among the Latin Letters of State written by Milton in the name of the English Parliament, there is one, of date March 1651, addressed "To the Most Serene Christina, Queen of the Swedes, Goths, and Vandals," acknowledging an embassy from her, and reciprocating her desire "that the ancient peace, traffic, and commerce between the English and the Swedes may prove diuturnal and every day increase." This friendliness continued into Cromwell's Protectorate; one of the incidents of which was the conclusion of an embassy on which Bulstrode Whitlocke had been despatched into Sweden in November 1653. The embassy, conducted skilfully by Whitlocke, resulted in a formal Treaty between England and Sweden in May 1654. The Treaty was really between Cromwell and Christina; for, though Cromwell had not been named Protector when Whitlocke left England on his embassy, the Protectorate was arranged before

Whitlocke had well begun his negotiations in Sweden, and Whitlocke's new credentials for the business were in the name of "Oliverius, P." Whitlocke's *Journal* of his Swedish embassy (published in two vols. 1855) gives interesting accounts of Christina and her Court, and her conversations with himself. She inquired much about Cromwell, and about other Englishmen of eminence. Once, when "Whitlocke asked her if she had seen a book lately written in Latin by one Milton, an Englishman, and how she liked his style," she "highly commended the matter of part of it, and the language." The book mentioned was, doubtless, the *Defensio Prima*, which had so turned the tables against Salmasius.

It was while Whitlocke's Treaty between Oliver and Christina was being settled that there appeared Milton's *Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano* (published May 1654). There is in that pamphlet an extraordinary passage of eulogy on Queen Christina; which, though it purports to be an expression of Milton's own gratitude to her for her recognition of the worth of his previous pleading for the English Commonwealth, may very well at the same time have been a politic insertion by Milton in his public character as Latin Secretary to Cromwell. The passage is long, and in a strain of extravagant and even outrageous hyperbole. It begins with a statement of the fact that Christina had read the *Defensio Prima*, approved of it, and by means of it seen through the glitter of Salmasius and changed her mind respecting that famous man's merits; it dwells particularly on a report, which had reached Milton, that Christina had declared that Milton's pamphlet was not an attack on true Sovereigns, like herself, but only on tyrants; and it ends thus: "I would speak of you as "the daughter of Adolphus, sole offspring of an unconquered and "famous king, did you not, Christina, outshine him as much as "wisdom excels force, and the studies of peace the arts of war. "Henceforward surely the Queen of the South will not alone be "celebrated: the North also has now her Queen, and one worthy "not merely to go forth to hear that wisest King of the Jews, or "whoever shall ever be like him, but to be resorted to from all "quarters by others, as an illustrious exemplar of regal virtues, "and a Heroine for all eyes; the whole concourse confessing "that nowhere on earth is there a temple good enough for the

" praises and deserts of one in whom they discern this as the least " thing in her, that she is a Queen and Monarch of so many " nations. Not the least, however, this, that she also herself feels " this to be the least of her honours, and considers that to be far " greater and more sublime than reigning: on this very account " deserving preference over numberless kings. She may, then, if " such a calamity is reserved for the Swedish nation, abdicate her " kingdom, but the Queen she can never lay aside, having proved " herself worthy of the empire not of Sweden only but of the " whole world."

It must have been while Milton was writing this amazing eulogy, and while Whitlocke's embassy was in progress, that Cromwell's gift of a portrait of himself was sent to Christina. Accompanying the portrait, we are to suppose, were the eight lines of Latin verse now under discussion. They are written in Cromwell's name. " War-powerful Virgin, Christina, Queen of " the North, bright star of the Arctic pole, you see what a fur- " rowed and wrinkled countenance I have under my helmet, and " altogether what a rugged veteran in arms I look. That is a " consequence of the hard life I have led, executing the orders of " the English people; but I pay my obeisances to you, Madam, " with all respect, and you must not suppose that this visage of " mine is always grim to crowned heads." Such, freely translated, is the meaning of the lines; and whoever wrote them had a good notion of what was wanted, and did the thing for Cromwell neatly. But was it Milton?

Milton was then Latin Secretary to Cromwell, and on the very spot for any such bit of Latin verse that Cromwell might require. He was also, as we have seen, at that very moment, so much interested in Christina that the composition of a few lines to be sent to her in Cromwell's name would have been a pleasure to him rather than a trouble. Farther, as far as internal evidence goes, the lines *might* be Milton's. But, on the other hand, there is the fact that the lines, with only verbal modifications, appeared as Andrew Marvell's in the edition of Marvell's *Miscellaneous Poems* published at London in 1681, or three years after Marvell's death, and there declared by Marvell's wife " to be printed according to the exact copies of my late dear husband under his own

handwriting." On the faith of this fact the lines have been retained as Marvell's in subsequent editions of his works, including the edition by Captain Edward Thompson, in three vols. quarto in 1776. Nor would there have been any reason for questioning Marvell's property in the lines thus affirmed, but for a passage in Toland's memoir of Milton prefixed to the Amsterdam edition of Milton's Prose Works in 1698. Speaking there of the numerous persons of note, foreign and English, who used to visit Milton in the house in Petty France, Westminster, where he lived for the eight years immediately preceding the Restoration (1652—1660), Toland adds: "Andrew Marvell, who by his parts "and probity made himself so much known since that time in "England, used to frequent him the oftenest of anybody; and "whether it was he or Milton (for both are named for it) that "made the verses sent with Cromwell's picture to the Queen of "Sweden I am uncertain; but, whoever the author was, they "deserve a room in this place." Toland then goes on to quote the Latin lines, appending an English metrical version; and it is the text of the lines so given in Toland's memoir that has been transferred into the editions of Milton's Poems.

The passage in Toland's memoir certainly shows that as early as 1698, notwithstanding the insertion of the lines as Marvell's in the edition of Marvell's *Miscellaneous Poems* seventeen years before, there was a doubt whether they were not really Milton's. Is it right now to be more sure on the point than Toland then felt himself entitled to be, and to claim the authorship for Milton positively? Newton, Dunster, Todd, and others, declare in favour of Milton's claim; Warton, on the other hand, thinks the lines may be fairly assigned to Marvell. On the whole, I am inclined to agree with Warton, for these reasons:—(1) So far as we know, the doubt as to the authorship which existed as early as 1698 was founded only on that argument from external probability which is still relied on in Milton's favour. The writing of such a scrap, it was fancied then as now, belonged almost officially to the department of the Latin Secretaryship to Cromwell; but, in 1654, when the lines were written, Milton was still Latin Secretary, and Marvell was not appointed to be his assistant in the Secretaryship till 1657. This argument, however, is not

so strong as it looks. Although Marvell was not associated with Milton in the Secretaryship till 1657, there is proof that he was hanging on about Milton's office with hopes of some such appointment as early as 1653. The proof is in the interesting form of a letter of Milton's (not in his own hand, but dictated by him) of date Feb. 21, 1652-3, addressed to President Bradshaw. "There will be with you to-morrow, upon some occasion "of business," Milton there writes to Bradshaw, "a gentleman "whose name is Mr. Marvell: a man, both by report and the "converse I have had with him, of singular desert for the State "to make use of; who also offers himself if there be any employ-"ment for him. His father was the minister of Hull, and he "hath spent four years abroad, in Holland, France, Italy, and "Spain, to very good purpose, as I believe, and the gaining of "those four languages: besides, he is a scholar and well read "in the Latin and Greek authors; and no doubt of an approved "conversation, for he comes now lately out of the house of the "Lord Fairfax, who was general, where he was intrusted to give "some instructions in the languages to the lady his daughter. If, "upon the death of Mr. Weckerlyn, the Council shall think that I "shall need any assistant in the performance of my place (though, "for my part, I find no encumbrance of that which belongs to "me, except it be in point of attendance at conferences with "ambassadors, which I must confess in my condition I am not "fit for), it would be hard for them to find a man so fit every way "for that purpose as this gentleman." Although this letter of Milton's took no immediate effect, and it was not Marvell but another person that was employed to help him in his duties for the next three years, it yet exhibits Marvell as quite at hand in 1654 for any such voluntary specimen of his Latinity as the lines in Cromwell's name to Christina. Milton, anxious to have him for his assistant, would even be likely to throw such a little opportunity in his way. (2) If the lines were Milton's, how could they have been published so authoritatively as Marvell's in his *Miscellaneous Poems* three years after his death? It would be necessary to suppose that Marvell, in the course of his growing intimacy with Milton, obtained from him a copy of the lines, and transcribed them in his own hand, and that this transcript, bearing

no indication of being a mere transcript, when it was found among Marvell's papers, was assumed to be an original of his. But this, in the face of the fact that there is no proof of any such thing having come down among Milton's papers, is a very forced supposition. True, there are some verbal differences between the copy of the lines in Marvell's Poems and the copy cited by Toland and appropriated as Milton's ; and so we may fancy that Toland cited a copy which was floating about, and not taken directly from Marvell's printed volume. But may not such a copy have been but a derivation from Marvell's original, either before or after its appearance in print in 1681, and may not a copy so floating about without Marvell's name have been ascribed laxly to Milton ? (3) The form in which the lines appear in Marvell's Poems, and their accompaniments there, make them almost certainly Marvell's. For they do not appear there as a detached and solitary scrap, but in a little group of Latin pieces, all in the same elegiac verse, connected both by time and by meaning. See Marvell's works, edit. 1776, vol. III. pp. 417—422. First comes a long piece of elegiacs, headed "*Doctori Ingelo, cum Domino Whitlocke ad Reginam* Sueciæ delegato a Protectore Residenti, Epistola :*" *i.e.* "Epistle to Dr. Ingeloe, residing with Lord Whitlocke, ambassador from the Protector to the Queen of Sweden." Ingeloe, who was, in fact, one of Whitlocke's chaplains through his embassy, appears to have been a personal friend of Marvell's ; and the poem opens with kind inquiries how his delicate friend is faring in the cold Swedish climate.

"Quid facis, arctoi charissime transfuga cœli,
Ingele, proh serò cognite, rapte citò ?
Num satis hybernum defendis pellibus astrum,
Qui modo tam mollis, nec bene firmus, eras ?"

The greater portion of the poem, however, consists of a eulogy on Queen Christina, almost comparable, for its extravagance, to Milton's prose eulogy in his *Defensio Secunda*. The writer has seen her portrait, and this is his impression :—

"Vidimus effigiem, mistasque coloribus umbras :
Sic quoque Sceptripotens, sic quoque visa Dea.
Augustum decorant (rarò concordia !) frontem
Majestas et Amor, Forma Pudorque simul.

Ingens virgineo spirat Gustavus in ore;
  Agnoscas animos fulmineumque patrem.
Nulla suo nituit tam lucida stella sub axe;
  Non ea quæ meruit crimine Nympha polum."

Here, besides the general fact that Marvell, at the time of Whitlocke's Swedish embassy, was interested in Queen Christina as much as Milton was, and writing about her, observe the similarity of the phraseology to that of the lines in dispute. In the lines Christina is "*bellipotens virgo*" and "*arctoi lucida stella poli;*" and here she is "*sceptripotens*" and "*lucida stella sub suo axe*"—actually the same thing. Observe also that Marvell has been looking at a portrait of Christina, and connect this circumstance with the tenor of the two subsequent and shorter pieces of the same group. One is this distich:—

IN EFFIGIEM OLIVERI CROMWELLI.

"Hæc est quæ toties inimicos umbra fugavit,
  At sub quâ cives otia lenta terunt."

In other words, about the same time that Marvell saw a portrait of Christina he saw a portrait of Cromwell; and, as he had given his impression of the one, so he here gives his impression of the other. Not completely, however; for he reverts to the subject in another piece of eight lines. They are the eight lines which have caused all this inquiry; and here is how they appear in Marvell's Works:

IN EANDEM REGINÆ SUECIÆ TRANSMISSAM.

"Bellipotens Virgo, Septem Regina Trionum,
  Christina, arctoi lucida stella poli,
Cernis quas merui durâ sub casside rugas;
  Sicque senex armis impiger ora fero;
Invia fatorum dum per vestigia nitor,
  Exequor et populi fortia jussa manu:
At tibi submittit frontem reverentior umbra,
  Nec sunt hi vultus regibus usque truces."

Except for the *sicque* instead of *utque* and the *fero* instead of *tero* in the fourth line, and the *At* instead of *Ast* in the seventh, we have here the identical piece which has been claimed as Milton's.

But, unless the two other pieces of the group are also Milton's (which no one has ventured to assert), how much more naturally do they now suggest themselves as Marvell's! He has been writing in Latin elegiacs about the Swedish Queen, and especially describing her portrait; he has also written a Latin elegiac distich "ON THE PORTRAIT OF OLIVER CROMWELL;" what more natural than that, when he heard that this portrait was to be sent to Christina, he should, asked or unasked, write a sequel "ON THE SAME SENT TO THE QUEEN OF SWEDEN"? In short, unless we are prepared to deprive Marvell of all the three pieces of the group, it seems hard to take the third away from him. Add this final consideration, that, as Milton was totally blind in 1654, lines about a portrait would hardly then be expected from him, even though he was Latin Secretary.

With this long explanation (too long for the mere trifle that has occasioned it, but involving particulars about Milton's life which it is well that readers of his Poems should have in their possession) we let the lines *Ad Christinam Suecorum Reginam, nomine Cromwelli* stand meanwhile in this volume, as they have done so long in other editions of Milton.——A word or two more on Christina's subsequent history. Alas! it was the sheerest bathos. At the time of Whitlocke's embassy, as is indicated by Milton's words at the end of his encomium on Christina in his *Defensio Secunda*, she was arranging her abdication of the Swedish crown. The abdication was finally completed in June 1654, when she resigned the crown to her cousin, known as Charles X. of Sweden. Christina was then but twenty-eight years of age; and she did not die till 1689, when she was sixty-three, having outlived her successor Charles X. (1654—1660), and seen *his* successor Charles XI. on the Swedish throne. The thirty-five years of her life after her abdication were years of wandering through the world and of the wildest behaviour wherever she went. Immediately after her abdication, she abjured Protestantism at Brussels; shortly afterwards she declared herself a Roman Catholic at Innspruck; and thenceforward people heard of her as flashing here and there through Europe—at Rome, in France, back in Sweden for a time, back in France, and back in Rome last of all—everywhere with a train of the queerest composition;

herself in a costume which was neither man's nor woman's, restlessly trying to assert her continued concern in the politics and the speculation of the times, quarrelling to this effect with Kings and Popes and otherwise performing the oddest antics. Some thought her a splendid eccentric, and perhaps she was; more thought her crazed; all remembered, in pity, that she was the daughter of the great Gustavus. Both Milton and Marvell, ere they died, may have blushed in recollection of what they had written about her while she was still the young mystery of Sweden.

SYLVARUM LIBER.

IN OBITUM PROCANCELLARII MEDICI.

Anno ætatis 17.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

In both Milton's editions this piece is dated "*Anno ætatis* 16." This date is a blunder. For, even if we allow Milton his ordinary liberty of dating, according to which the phrase must be translated "at the age of 16 years" and not "in the 16th year of his age" (see Introductions to Elegies Second and Third), the dating will not correspond with the incident of the Poem. That incident was the death of John Gostlin, M.D., Master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, from 1618, and Vice-Chancellor of the University for the second time in the year 1625-6. His Vice-Chancellorship would have expired Nov. 3, 1626; but he died some days before that date, and still holding the office: viz. on the 21st of October, 1626. The Michaelmas Term of Milton's third academic year had just begun, and Milton was full seventeen years of age, and, in fact, verging on eighteen. This dating "*anno ætatis* 16" was, therefore, a slip of memory.—The Dr. Gostlin, whose death is lamented in the poem, in very pretty mythological language and in good Horatian verse, was a Norwich man by birth, educated at Caius College, admitted M.D. in 1602, and afterwards Regius Professor of Physic in the University. Caius College, founded by a medical man, and the chief College in Cambridge for the study of Physic, was one of the few Colleges the Masters of which did not require to be in holy orders; and, when Gostlin's

turn came round to be Vice-Chancellor, it was something of a rarity in the University to see an M.D. rather than the customary D.D. in that office. "Here comes our medical Vice-Chancellor," one may fancy the Cantabs of 1625-6 saying to each other when they saw Gostlin in the streets. Fuller calls him "a great scholar, eloquent Latinist, and rare physician," and adds that he was "a strict man in keeping, and magistrate in pressing, the statutes of the College and University." His death, just at the close of his year of office, and when the Colleges had re-assembled for a new session, naturally occasioned versifying. Milton's verses are kindly, and turn a good deal on the truism that even the most skilful medical man must die, like others, when his time comes.

In Quintum Novembris.

Anno ætatis 17.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This is a Gunpowder Plot poem, written by Milton for Guy Fawkes's Day, or the Fifth of November, 1626. There are four Latin trifles on the same subject among the Elegies, written by Milton, according to academic custom, in half-comic celebration of anniversaries of the black day during his undergraduateship; but the present piece, in sustained Hexameters, is a much more elaborate performance. It is, indeed, one of the very best of Milton's things in Latin. The spirit, it is true, is that of the common popular Protestantism of England in Milton's time, which firmly believed in all the traditional details of the Plot of 1605, and regarded it as a wide-spread conspiracy of the Roman Catholics, characteristic of their principles and prompted by the Papacy itself. In the poem, it is Satan himself, the Arch-demon, the King of the Damned, that conceives the idea of punishing the Protestant Island, and perhaps winning it back to his rule, by blowing up King James, and all the peers and chiefs of his realm, by means of "powder of nitre" placed under the floor of the place of their assembly. Winging through the air to Italy, he arouses "his Son," the Pope, at dead of night, to suggest to him the scheme; and straightway Murder and Treason

are called from their cave at the Pope's command. But meanwhile the Almighty was looking down from Heaven, and laughing; and by His care, through the instrumentality of Fame or Rumour, called from her far-off temple for the occasion, the faithful Britons were forewarned, and the horrible deed prevented. Naturally, a poem of which this is the outline (and there are minuter ferocities against the Papacy in the filling-up) will be read in different humours by different persons. But the execution of the poem, the power of imagination and of language shown in it, cannot fail to strike even the reader who is least satisfied with its spirit. I would instance particularly the description of Satan flying through the air and beholding Britain (lines 7—47), that of the den of Murder and Treason (lines 139—156), and that of the Temple of Fame (lines 170—193). The ending of the poem is rather abrupt.

In obitum Præsulis Eliensis.

Anno ætatis 17.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

On the 5th of October, 1626, or only a fortnight after the death of Dr. Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, there died another prelate, Dr. Nicholas Felton, Bishop of Ely. Like Andrewes, he was a Cambridge man, of Pembroke Hall, and he had, like Andrewes, been for some time Master of that Hall before he was made a bishop. Milton, who had just written his Elegy on Andrewes' death (*Elegia Tertia*), paid a similar honour to his brother-bishop, but employed Iambic verse of alternate Trimeters and Dimeters instead of Elegiacs. Hence this piece on Felton comes among the *Sylvæ.*

Naturam non pati Senium.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This piece of Hexameters will be best introduced by an extract, in translation, from one of Milton's *Epistolæ Familiares*, dated "Cambridge, July 2, 1628," and addressed to his former master at St. Paul's School, Alexander Gill the younger :—" The matter

" respecting which I wrote to you rather obscurely," Milton here says to Gill, " you will find contained in the accompanying sheets. " When your letter reached me I was (being hard pressed by the " shortness of the time) labouring upon it with all my might; for " a certain Fellow of our College, who had to act as Respondent " in the philosophical disputation at this Commencement, chanced " to entrust to my puerility the composition of the verses required " by the annual custom to be written on the questions in dispute, " being himself already long past the age for trifles of that sort, " and more intent on serious things. The result I have sent you " in type." I have little doubt that what Milton thus sent to Gill was the present piece, *Naturam non pati Senium.* If so, it was one of the pieces of verse printed copies of which were distributed, according to custom, by the University Bedels at the Cambridge Commencement ceremonial, or annual meeting for the conferring of degrees, held in St. Mary's Church on Tuesday, the 1st of July, 1628. A little explanation may be added.

The Cambridge " Commencement" was not held, as the name might suggest to the uninitiated, at the beginning of the academic year, but was actually the closing ceremony of every such year. It was called the " Commencement " because those who graduated in Divinity, Arts, Law, Physic, and Music were then said to "commence" in their respective faculties, and were designated *Inceptores.* Part of the business in the graduation in each faculty consisted of what was called an Act or Disputation in that faculty, carried on in Latin between one appointed debater-in-chief called the Respondent (in the Divinity Act there were generally two Respondents) and other debaters who attacked him successively and were called Opponents. Thus, early in the morning, as soon as all had assembled in St. Mary's Church, the Vice-Chancellor presiding, there began the Divinity Act. The Act was opened by the Respondent, or one of the Respondents, in Divinity, who read first of all the theses or propositions he meant to maintain. While he was doing so the Bedels delivered copies of verses and also small coins to all the Doctors present. Then followed the debate on the theses between the Respondent and his Opponents; after which there was the ceremonious conferring of the degree of D.D. on all the candidates of the year for that

degree. Next, and usually about mid-day, came on the Philosophical Act and Graduation in Arts. This was a richer and more diversified affair than the Divinity Graduation which had preceded it, not only because the candidates for the M.A. degree each year were a very numerous body, consisting of young men from all the Colleges, but also because custom tolerated a great deal of liberty and even of fun in the philosophical discussion. Here also, however, the backbone of the business was the Latin logomachy between the appointed representative of the Arts faculty, called the Respondent, and the Opponents who successively attacked him; and here also the logomachy began with the reading of the Respondent's thesis, and the distribution of his verses, while he was reading it, by the University Bedels. After the Act was over, there was a specimen only of the actual graduation in Arts within the church, in the persons of the ten or twelve Commencers from King's College; and the rest were marched off to receive their M.A. degree in the Public School. For by this time it was growing late, and the Law Act, the Physic Act, and the Music Act, with their accompanying graduations, had still to come. The candidates for the degrees of LL.D., M.D., and Mus.D., were generally few, however; and sometimes there was no candidate at all in Music.

Milton may have been present already at three Commencements; but that of 1628 had a peculiar interest for him. Not that he had any direct concern in it. He was near the end of his Undergraduateship, it is true, and was expecting his B.A. degree; but that degree was not conferred at the great Comitia in July, but separately in January, and he had still six months to wait for it. But Bainbrigge, Master of Milton's own College of Christ's, was Vice-Chancellor of the University for the year 1627-8, and there was a relish for the undergraduates of Christ's in this fact, and in the prospect of his presidency in the Comitia of July 1628. Nor was that all. One of the Senior Fellows of Christ's, it appears, had been selected for the important Respost of pondent in the Philosophical Act for that year; and that Fellow, though tough enough for the prose-work of the Act, had found the bit of verse expected from him quite out of his habits, or had broken down over it at the last moment, and had asked Milton to help him out.

With some pains, from the shortness of the time, Milton had furbished up what he thought would pass; and so the Christ's College people might congratulate themselves triply on the representation of their College at the Commencement of 1628. Not only would their Master preside as Vice-Chancellor, and not only would a Fellow of their College be Respondent in the Philosophical Act, but the Latin verses which the University Bedels would distribute in connexion with that Act would be (but perhaps it was a secret) by an undergraduate of Christ's. Actually the verses were put into print and distributed by the Bedels; and on the 2nd of July, or the day after the Commencement, Milton was able to send a copy, or some copies, of them to Gill in London.

One would like now to know which of the thirteen Fellows of Christ's it was that begged Milton's poetical help, and what was the subject of the thesis which the verses were to illustrate. Unfortunately, though a manuscript of the Cambridge antiquary Baker (Harl. MS. 7038) has furnished me with the names of the Divinity Respondents in the Commencement of 1628, and with the exact subjects of their theses, no mention is there made of the Respondent in the Philosophical Act or of his subject. For the *person*, if we put out of the question Milton's first tutor, Chappell, and his second tutor, Tovey (see *antè*, p. 328), I guess some such Senior Fellow of the College as Mr. Alsop, Mr. Sandelands, or Mr. Fenwicke. For the *subject*, if I am right in supposing the verses which Milton furnished were his lines *Naturam non pati Senium*, these lines themselves are an indication. "*That Nature is not subject to old age*" is the proposition maintained in the lines. They are, in fact, a powerful, and very eloquent and poetical, protest against the notion of a gradual decadence or deterioration of the physical Universe or visible frame of things. "Shall the face of Nature, disfigured by furrowing wrinkles, grow thin and lean, and the general mother of all things become barren with old age, and cease from farther production?" This is the question asked, and the answer is *No*. The Almighty, it is maintained, founded all things more securely at first, and implanted in the Universe such a principle of stability, nay of rhythmical progressiveness, that no weakening, no gradual lapsing into confusion and chaos, is to be looked for, but rather an

unwearied persistence in producing, an evolution on and on, until the sudden end of all in predestined crash and conflagration. The verses being in this strain, we are led to think that the Philosophical Thesis which they were written to illustrate must have been some form of the same proposition. It is certainly known, at all events, that a question much debated in the speculative world of England about 1628 was the question whether there were signs of decay in Nature, whether the Present were necessarily inferior to the Past, or whether endurance, or even general progressiveness and improvement, might not be the rule. Bacon's influence, opposed as it was to that abject reverence for antiquity which had prevailed since the Revival of Letters, had given an impulse to what was still perhaps the heterodox sentiment, namely faith in the present and in the future. But a more recent contribution expressly on the same side of the question had been a work by Dr. George Hakewill, Archdeacon of Surrey, published at Oxford in 1627 under the title "*Apologie of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World; or an Examination and Censure of the common Error touching Nature's perpetual and universal Decay.*" The motto prefixed to the book was the text, Eccl. vii. 10, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this;" and the work throughout is an able argument, though in a rather old style, against the notion of a gradual degeneracy in Nature. The book appears to have produced a great impression, most of the older men standing out for the Past and for Nature's degeneracy, but the younger spirits and some of the older taking part with Hakewill; and perhaps the subject of the Cambridge Philosophical Act of 1628 was some form of Hakewill's thesis.

De Ideâ Platonicâ quemadmodum Aristoteles intellexit.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This is, clearly, also an academic exercise; but in which year of Milton's residence at Cambridge it was written, and for what occasion, I cannot determine. Warton tells us that he had found it "inserted at full length, as a specimen of unintelligible meta-

physics," in a scarce book of burlesques published about the year 1716. But the poem, though metaphysical, and with an intentional touch of the burlesque in it, is quite intelligible, and really interesting. It answers exactly to its title, "*On the Platonic Idea as understood by Aristotle.*" That is to say, with an evident admiration of Plato, and an imaginative sympathy with his doctrine of an eternal Idea or Archetype, one and universal, according to which Man was formed, and which reproduces itself in men's minds and thoughts, it yet shows how, by a too physical or too coldly rational construction of this doctrine, it may be turned into burlesque. Where shall that famous personage, the Idea or Archetype, be sought, or who has ever been able to lay salt on his tail? Is he among the stars, or is he in the moon, or does he slumber somewhere in the under-world, or does he walk the earth somewhere as some huge giant? Well, really, if this imaginary and uncatchable monster, which the Aristotelians were fond of figuring as Plato's Idea or Archetype, was to be considered the Idea or Archetype of Plato's own teaching, all that one could say was that Plato must either recall Poets into his Republic, as being himself the biggest fabler of all, or else leave his Republic to get on without Plato!

AD PATREM.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

These Hexameters are undated, but their date is hinted by their meaning. They are an affectionate address to the poet's father, apparently in reply to some mild remarks of the father on the subject of the son's dedication of himself to a life of mere Poetry and Literature, and not, as had been hoped, to one of the professions. They were written, therefore, after Milton had left Cambridge, and had begun his secluded life of study at his father's country-place at Horton in Buckinghamshire. In lines 73—76 the reference to Horton seems to be distinct.

Milton's father was himself an excellent and interesting man. He was from the neighbourhood of Oxford, where a Roman Catholic family of Miltons, the poet's ancestors, are found living, in the rank of yeomen, from about 1550 onwards. One of the

family, Richard Milton, of Stanton St. John's, yeoman, was very resolute in his adherence to the old Religion, and is mentioned twice in the Recusant Rolls for Oxfordshire as among those who were heavily fined towards the end of Elizabeth's reign (1601) for obstinate non-attendance at their parish churches. He was the poet's grandfather, one of his sons, John Milton, being the poet's father. This John Milton, who became a Protestant, and is said to have been cast off by his father on that account, had settled in London, and was in business there as a scrivener, before the above-mentioned date of his father's fines for recusancy. He was admitted to the freedom of the Company of Scriveners in Feb. 1599—1600, having previously for some time been apprentice to a scrivener named Colbron. Mr. Hyde Clarke, by whose researches these facts were ascertained (*Athenæum* of March 19, 1859), concludes that he cannot have been then much over twenty-one years of age, the usual age of the termination of apprenticeship in those days, and therefore that the tradition, through Aubrey, which would refer his birth to about 1563, makes him sixteen years older than he really was. The business of a scrivener in Old London was an important, and sometimes a lucrative, one. It consisted in the drawing up of wills, marriage settlements, and other deeds, the lending out of money for clients, and much else now done partly by attorneys and partly by law-stationers. The house of the new scrivener, John Milton, which was also his place of business, was the Spread Eagle in Bread Street, Cheapside, in the very heart of London. Though the Great Fire of 1666 swept away old Bread Street, the exact site of the house may yet be pointed out in the present Bread Street. There the scrivener married, probably in 1600, and there his children were born. They were six in all; of whom only three survived to maturity—the eldest, a daughter Anne, afterwards Mrs. Phillips, and again, by a second marriage, Mrs. Agar; John Milton, the poet, born Dec. 9, 1608; and Christopher Milton, afterwards Sir Christopher Milton and a judge, born Dec. 3, 1615. The household in Bread Street seems to have been a peculiarly peaceful and happy one, with a tone of pious Puritanism prevailing in it, but with the liberal cheerfulness belonging to prosperous circumstances and to ingenious and

cultivated tastes. For one thing, music was perpetual in it. The scrivener was not only passionately fond of music, but even of such note as a composer that, apart altogether from the great fame of his son, some memory of him might have lingered among us to this day. Madrigals, songs, and psalm-tunes of his composition are to be seen yet in music-books published before his son was born, or while he was but in his boyhood, and not in mere inferior music-books, but in collections in which Morley, Wilbye, Bull, Dowland, Ellis Gibbons, Orlando Gibbons, and others of the best artists of the day, were his fellow-contributors. Thus in the *Triumphes of Oriana*, a collection of madrigals in honour of Queen Elizabeth, published in 1601, one of the pieces is Milton's; in the *Teares and Lamentations of a Sorrowfull Soule*, a collection of sacred songs, edited in 1614 by Sir William Leighton, Knight, three of the songs are to Milton's music; and, in Ravenscroft's *Whole Book of Psalmes*, a compendium of Church-music published in 1621, the two tunes called "Norwich" and "York" are of Milton's composition. As York tune is a favourite to this day, there may be said to remain, through it, some direct thrill from the spirit of Milton's father in the English air. But what music round about himself while he lived! There must have been frequent musical evenings, with one or more musical acquaintances present, in the house in Bread Street; books of music and musical instruments were parts of its furniture; and the young poet was taught by his father both to sing and to play the organ. But the scrivener's designs for his children went beyond their mere training in his own art. It was his care to give them the best education possible, and to grudge nothing of his means towards that end. From the first there is proof that his heart was bound up in his son John, and that he had conceived the highest expectations of what that son would turn out to be. A portrait of the poet, as a sweet, serious, round-headed boy, at the age of ten, still exists, which his father caused to be done by the foreign painter then most in fashion, and which hung on the wall of one of the rooms in the house in Bread Street. Both father and mother doted on the boy and were proud of his promise. And so, after the most careful tuition of the boy at home, by his Scottish preceptor Young (see *antè*, p. 330), and his farther training by the two Gills

at St. Paul's School, close to Bread Street (see *antè*, p. 331), he was sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1625, whither his younger brother, Christopher, followed him in Feb. 1630-31. The expense of maintaining two sons at Cambridge was considerable, and proves that the scrivener must have succeeded well in his business.

That the scrivener's business had been a flourishing one is farther proved by the fact that he was able to retire from it, in whole or in part, in or about 1632, to the country-house at Horton, which he either took then, or had already been in possession of for some time. Thither, in that year, his son, having completed his seven years at the University and taken his M.A. degree, went to reside with him. So far all his highest hopes of that son had been fulfilled. He was then twenty-three years of age; and what youth comparable to him had the University sent out—what youth of such fair grace of form, of such genius and accomplishments, of character so manly and noble? A second portrait of Milton, done in the time of his Cambridge studentship, when he was about twenty-one years of age, attests the continued pride in him of his father and mother. Only one thing a little troubled the elderly people, and particularly the father. This son of theirs, whom they had destined for the Church, had clearly and resolutely abjured that destination of himself as against his conscience; the profession of the Law, thought of for a moment, had also been set aside; and here he was back on their hands, with no clear line of life before him, such as other young men of his age had, but buried in books and lost in Poetry. Some remonstrances to this effect may have been expressed by the father; but, if so, they must have been in the mildest and most hesitating terms (for Milton, I fancy, had learnt to be master and more in his father's house). Or, without any such remonstrances, Milton may have divined what was passing in the minds of his parents and in their colloquies concerning him. And so, on some occasion when the subject had been broached, or it was strong in Milton's musings, he writes the poem *Ad Patrem.* The ex-scrivener had had a pretty good education himself, and could perhaps make out a bit of Latin at any time, if you did not hurry him.

One can fancy him reading this pleading of his son. Very

skilful pleading it is. "Do not despise Poetry, my dear father—you of all men," is the substance of it; but the expression is rich and varied. There is an express reference to his father's talent and distinction in Music, as in itself a reason why he should think well of Poetry. Might not Phœbus in this case have divided himself between two of one family, giving one set of his choicest gifts, the strictly musical, to the sire, and the other, the poetical and verbal, to the son? Nay, in his inner heart, his father does *not* despise Poetry, whatever he may pretend. His whole conduct hitherto towards the very son who is addressing him proves the contrary, proves his carelessness of wealth, and of all that baser minds prize, in comparison with mental cultivation and ideal good. Had ever a father been so thoughtful for a son, lavished so much on his education? By his desire, and at his expense, had not that education included not only Latin and Greek and the more ordinary studies of school and university, but French, Italian, Hebrew, and even all the kinds of special science accessible in London in addition to what the University could supply? Was it not owing to his father's kindness and forbearance that even now he was not driven into the Law or any other immediate market for his talents, but was walking about at leisure in a rustic retirement, free to choose his own occupations and follow his own fancies? Let his father have faith even in the direction these occupations and these fancies were taking! What if his career were to be that of a Poet? Was not that a career in which something worthy might be done? Even in that career might he not partly repay his filial debt? Nay, might not the very lines he was then writing survive to posterity, and keep alive to a far future age the memory of so excellent and generous a father?

"Well, John, I *have* faith in you: take your own way, whatever it is; God has given me enough of means, my son, for all immediate needs; and, while I live, what I have is yours." As surely as if we had heard these words spoken, they were the response of Milton's father to the pleading of this Poem. They were his response not in words only, but in fact:—Until Milton was thirty-two years of age, if even then, he did not earn a penny for himself. From his twenty-fourth to his thirtieth year he remained at

Horton, under his father's roof, studying and dreaming. Then, his mother having died in 1637, and his younger brother, Christopher, who was a student of law, having married and come to reside with his wife at Horton, he set out, with his father's consent, and at his expense, on his Italian tour (1638-9), taking a man-servant with him. On his return from Italy, he found his widowed father still at Horton, with Christopher and his wife. Leaving him there, he took up his own residence in London, first in lodgings in St. Bride's Churchyard, Fleet Street (1639-40), and then in a house in Aldersgate Street (1640), where his two young nephews, Edward and John Phillips, boarded with him, and where he began to receive other pupils. Here, after the meeting of the Long Parliament (Nov. 3, 1640), he began his career as a controversialist on the Parliamentarian and revolutionary side by his series of Anti-Episcopal Pamphlets. In one of these pamphlets, *The Reason of Church Government*, in the course of a sketch of his own life till then, there is an affectionate mention of his father, very much in the strain of the poem under notice. "After I had, "from my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my "father, whom God recompense, been exercised to the tongues and "some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and "teachers both at home and in the schools," are the words of this passage; and similar references, less express, may be discerned in other places of the same series of pamphlets. Meanwhile, his younger brother Christopher having been called to the Bar, and having taken the Royalist side in politics, there was a migration of him and his young wife, and of the old man with them, from Horton to Reading. They were in that town when it was besieged and taken by the Parliamentarian General, Essex, in 1643. Then, Christopher and his wife shifting for themselves, the old man came to reside in London with his son John. He was in the house in Aldersgate Street through the sad episode of Milton's marriage with his first wife and her desertion of him; and his grandson Phillips describes him here as "living wholly retired to his rest and devotion, without the least trouble imaginable." After the return of Milton's wife and Milton's reconciliation with her (1645) the father continued to live with them in their larger house in the Barbican, where also some of the wife's relatives,

driven from their home near Oxford by the ruin of the King's cause, were guests for some time. Here he saw Milton's eldest child, Anne, born July 29, 1646, and here he died eight months afterwards, March 1646-7. He was buried in St. Giles's, Cripplegate. According to Aubrey, he "read without spectacles at 84," and it was not from him that Milton inherited weakness of eyesight. As we have seen, however, Aubrey is probably wrong in making Milton's father to have lived to such extreme old age. It is more likely that he was not quite seventy years of age when he died.

Greek Verses.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

Milton, though an assiduous and enthusiastic reader of the Greek classics, did not give much time to the practice of Greek composition. He has left but three pieces of Greek verse; and the verdict upon *them* by the critic of subsequent times who has published the minutest examination of them (Dr. Charles Burney, 1757—1817), is that they show imperfect Greek scholarship. He finds lax construction in them, questionable usages of words, and even false quantities.

Psalm CXIV.—This seems to have been a favourite Psalm with Milton, for it is one of the two which he had paraphrased in English when he was fifteen years of age (see *antè*, p. 186). The present version of it in Greek Hexameters was done in 1634, as appears by a Latin letter of Milton to Gill the younger, of date Dec. 4 in that year. Sending Gill a copy of the version, in return for some verses which he had received from Gill, he explains that it had been done on a sudden impulse, before getting up, at daybreak one morning of the preceding week. "Should anything occur to you in it," he adds, "not coming up to your usual opinion of our productions, understand that, since I left your school, this is the first and only thing I have composed in Greek, —employing myself, as you know, more willingly in Latin and English matters; inasmuch as whoever spends study and pains in this age on Greek composition runs a risk of singing mostly to the deaf." Nevertheless Dr. Burney pronounces the version superior

to the Greek version of the same Psalm by James Duport, Milton's contemporary, and Professor of Greek at Cambridge. "It has more vigour," he says, "but is not wholly free from inaccuracies."

PHILOSOPHUS AD REGEM QUENDAM, ETC.—As these Hexameters appear in the Edition of 1645, and as their tenor suggests that they were done after the Civil War had begun, we may date them between 1642 and 1645. Milton probably imagined himself coming, by some possibility, into the situation of the "Philosophus," and the imaginary "Rex" in that case might be Charles I. The piece has a touch in it of the peculiar spirit of Sonnet VIII., beginning "Captain or Colonel." The Greek is very much found fault with by Dr. Burney, whose criticism of the five lines extends mercilessly over a greater number of closely-printed pages.

IN EFFIGIEI EJUS SCULPTOREM.—These satirical Iambics appeared in the Edition of 1645, engraved under Marshall's portrait of Milton; in the Edition of 1673, which did not contain that portrait, they were put into the text. The Epigram, according to Dr. Burney, is "far inferior to those on Bad Painters which are preserved in the Greek Anthologia: it has no point." One may differ from Dr. Burney here. The Epigram is a savage practical joke, and the point of it lies in that fact. (See the story, *antè*, pp. 168-9.) But Dr. Burney takes exception also to the Greek. For example, the antepenultimate of the word δυσμίμημα in the last line is long, so that Milton either did not know that, or he was guilty of the impropriety of making the fourth foot of an Iambic trimeter a spondee. "The Poet does not appear to have suspected," says Dr. Burney, "that, while he was censuring the *Effigiei Sculptor*, he was exposing himself to the severity of criticism by admitting into his verses disputable Greek and false metre." The moral is that, when one makes a practical joke, it is dangerous to do it in Greek.

AD SALSILLUM, POETAM ROMANUM, ÆGROTANTEM.—SCAZONTES.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This was written at Rome, either in 1638 or in 1639, in one of Milton's two visits to that city. The person addressed is Joannes

Salsillus, or Giovanni Salzilli, a Roman poet, whose acquaintance Milton had made in these visits. The phrase "a Roman Poet" might now mislead us. Rome then swarmed with wits and men of letters, meeting together in clubs or academies, of which there may have been about twenty in all. There must have been at least 500 authors of one kind or another in Rome then, of whom the majority were "poets" habitually or on occasion. Only a selection of these figure now in the standard Histories of Italian Literature, and of these Salzilli is not one. He must have been of considerable note in Roman society in his day, however; for I find him a leading contributor to a volume published at Rome in 1637 and dedicated to Cardinal Cesarini under the title of "*Poesie de' Signori Accademici Fantastici*," i.e. Poems by members of the Academy of the Fantastics. There are fifty-one contributors to this volume; but Salzilli's contributions occupy twenty-two pages out of a total of 272, and consist of eleven Sonnets, two Canzoni, one Canzonetta, and one descriptive poem. Probably he was a young man and habitually an invalid. He was in bad health, at all events, when Milton addressed to him these *Scazontes*, i.e. verses written in the "limping measure" employed by the Greek poet Hipponax, the peculiarity of which is that the verse is regular Iambic trimeter until the last foot, where, by the substitution of a spondee or trochee for the expected Iambus, an effect is given as of coming to the last step of a stair with the wrong emphasis. To bring out this effect fully, the fifth or penultimate foot ought always to be an Iambus, but Milton has not attended strictly to this rule. In the verses Milton expresses his wishes for Salzilli's recovery, pays him a compliment on his poetry, and refers to the four lines of Latin elegiac verse in which Salzilli had, with Italian politeness, so hyperbolically praised Milton, on slight acquaintance, extolling him above Homer, Virgil, and Tasso. See the lines among the Testimonies to Milton by Italians, prefixed to the Latin Poems. There are some pleasant allusions in the Scazontes to Milton's delight in the Italian climate and to his walks about Rome.

Mansus.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

This is a poem of remarkable interest, addressed to the most distinguished, in some respects, of all the Italians with whom Milton became personally acquainted during his Italian journey, viz. the Neapolitan, Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, and Lord of Bisaccio and Panca.

Manso was born in 1561, three years before Shakespeare; and his long life had been spent chiefly in such occupations as the political condition of Naples and Southern Italy, then subject to the Spaniards and governed by Viceroys from Madrid, permitted to a wealthy and high-minded native of those parts. The cultivation of philosophy, art, and poetry for himself, and the encouragement of these pursuits in others, and of a life of at least pleasant sociability where political independence was denied, had been his business and delight. He was not unknown as an author. In 1608 there had been published at Milan, under the title of *Paradossi, ovvero dell' Amore Dialoghi*, some philosophical dialogues of his on Love; another set of his dialogues, of a similar nature, called *L'Erocallia*, had been published at Venice in 1619, and republished at Milan in 1628; and at Venice in 1635 there had appeared a collection of his juvenile poems, chiefly Sonnets and Canzoni, entitled *Poesie Nomiche, divise in Rime amorose, sacre e morali*. But it was less as an author than as a friend and patron of authors that Manso was loved and honoured. His life had been identified with the history of Italian Literature for half a century. No Italian of note during that period but Manso had known; few but had known and been indebted to Manso. Above all, he had been the friend, the bosom friend, of the two greatest poets of Italy in his generation, Tasso and Marini.——Tasso, in the strange madness that came over him in his manhood, clouding his beautiful mind, but leaving it still capable of the noblest poetry, had been led, in his wanderings over Italy, to Manso's door at Naples (1588). Manso, then in his twenty-eighth year, while Tasso was in his forty-fifth, had received the illustrious unfortunate, had kept him in his splendid villa at Naples and in

his country-house at Bisaccio, had tended him in his fits of gloom, and soothed him in those moments when the frenzy was at its strongest, and the air around him was full of visions and voices, and he would call on Manso to look and listen. Thus had grown up a friendship which lasted with Tasso's life. Twice again he had been Manso's guest; it was in Manso's house, in one of these visits, that he completed his *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, in one of the books of which he introduces Manso's name; in his Dialogue on Friendship Manso is one of the speakers, and it is dedicated to Manso and entitled *Il Manso;* and there are other recognitions of their intimacy in sonnets of Tasso addressed to Manso. On Tasso's death-bed in Rome (1595) he spoke of Manso; a picture of Tasso which Manso had painted was bequeathed back to him; and it was Manso that, some years afterwards, caused the well-known inscription "*Torquati Tassi Ossa*" to be cut on Tasso's tomb. In 1619 there had been published at Naples a Life of Tasso, without Manso's name, but known to be his, and containing an affectionate collection of personal details respecting the poet. It was a popular book in Italy, and had been several times reprinted.——Hardly less intimate than Manso's friendship with his illustrious senior, Tasso, had been his friendship with his junior, Marini (born 1569), Tasso's most celebrated successor in Poetry, though a corruption of Italian taste in Poetry is traced now to his sweet and sensuous genius. Marini, a Neapolitan by birth, but, like Tasso, much of a wanderer, had also been a frequent guest at Manso's villa, had been protected by him, and served in many ways; and, when Marini died, in 1625, two years after the publication of his *Adone*, the charge of his burial and of erecting his monument was left to Manso. It was understood that Manso was preparing a biography of Marini similar to that he had written of Tasso.——And now, with all these recollections of the past circling round him, the Marquis Manso, verging on eighty years of age, was living on at Naples, the most venerable man in the city, and indeed, since the death of Molino of Venice and that of Strozzi at Rome, the one conspicuous private patron of Art and Literature in all Italy. In the society of Naples he was supreme. He had founded there a club or academy, called the *Oziosi* ("The Idlers"), of which he was president, and the meet-

ings of which were held in his house; and there was another institution of his foundation, called the College *Dei Nobili*, the purpose of which was the education of the young Neapolitan nobles in manly arts and exercises. In the meetings of these institutions the old nobleman would be gay as the youngest present, joining even in their frolics. A certain high moral chivalry, however, for which he had been known from his youth, regulated his behaviour, and gave a dignity even to his humours in company. Also he was punctiliously scrupulous in matters of religion, and a most pious and orthodox son of the Church.

Milton's introduction to Manso, as he tells us himself (*Defensio Secunda*), was through a certain Eremite Friar, who was his companion in his journey from Rome to Naples in November 1638. The Marquis appears to have taken a great liking to the young Englishman, and to have been particularly gracious to him. "As long as I staid at Naples," says Milton, "I found him "truly most friendly to me, he himself acting as my guide "through the different parts of the city and the palace of the "Viceroy, and coming himself more than once to my inn to visit "me; and at my going away he seriously excused himself to me "in that, though he wished extremely to have shown me much "greater attention, he had not been able to do so in that city, "because I would not be more close in the matter of Religion." In the two Latin lines of compliment given by Manso to Milton, and included by Milton among the Testimonies prefixed to his Latin Poems, there is a hint at this Protestantism of Milton as the only fault he had in the old man's eyes. "Were but your "creed like your mind, form, grace, face, and morals, then you "would be not Anglic only, but, in faith, Angelic," says the old man, reviving in Milton's favour the play upon the words *Anglus* and *Angelus* attributed in the legend to Pope Gregory when he beheld the English youths in the Roman slave-market and grieved that such comely youths should be Pagans. But Milton carried away with him another token of Manso's regard. He describes distinctly in his *Epitaphium Damonis* (lines 181—197) two cups which Manso had given him, as a keepsake, carved round or painted by Manso himself with two designs, the one of an oriental subject, the other of a subject from classic mythology.

In return for Manso's distich and his cups, or possibly before receiving them, and in mere acknowledgment of Manso's great courtesy generally, Milton, before leaving Naples (Jan. 1638-9), sent to Manso the hundred hexameter lines now under notice. They are a very graceful acknowledgment indeed. Manso's venerable age and character, his long celebrity in the Literature of Italy, and the special interest attaching to him as the friend and biographer of Tasso, and the friend and patron of Marini to the last, are all touched on with feeling and with good taste ; there is the due expression of gratitude to Manso for his kindness to an unknown stranger from the far-off and foggy island ; and there is one passage, of information and compliment finely blended, which may have told Manso more about the stranger than he already knew, and roused his curiosity. It is the passage beginning "*O mihi si mea sors*" at line 78. "O were I to have such a friend to me in my intended career of Poetry as Manso was to Tasso and Marini !" is the drift of the passage ; which contains, moreover, the first published hint by Milton of his contemplated Arthurian Epic, or poem from British legendary History. The passage is worth reading, not only on this account, but also for its pathos and eloquence. Manso must have admired it, and may have thought of the young Englishman sometimes through the next few years, and wondered what he was doing in his native land. Much news of Milton, however, in Poetry at least, can hardly have reached Manso before his death. He died at Naples, at the age of eighty-four, in 1645, the very year when Milton's first edition of his Poems was published.

EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS.

(Editions of 1645 and 1673.)

In the Introductions to the *Elegia Prima* and the *Elegia Sexta*, the story of Milton's friendship with the half-Italian youth Charles Diodati has been brought down to the end of the year 1629. Since then there had been no interruption of the friendship, but rather a strengthening of it by new ties as the two friends grew older. Two Latin letters of Milton to Diodati, both written in September 1637, and now printed among Milton's *Epistolæ*

Familiares, are the best information we have as to the mutual position of the two friends at that date, when Milton was in his thirtieth year and Diodati had just passed that age.

Diodati, it appears from those letters, had finished his medical education, and was in practice somewhere in the north of England; near Chester, it has been supposed, but that is only a guess from the fact that he had been in that neighbourhood in 1626, the date of the *Elegia Prima*. Milton, on the other hand, was mainly at Horton, but sometimes in London; whence, indeed, his two letters are written. They are full of gossip and affection. "How is it with you, pray?" asks Milton in the first, dated Sept. 2. "Are you in good health? Are there in those "parts any learned folks or so with whom you can willingly "associate and chat, as we were wont together? When do you "return? How long do you intend to dwell among those hyper-"boreans?" Again, in the second, dated Sept. 23, Diodati having replied in the meanwhile, and there having been the usual excuses on both sides for laziness in letter-writing: "I would not "that true friendship turned on balances of letters and salutations, "all which may be false; but that it should depend on both sides "on the deep roots of the mind and sustain itself there, and that, "once begun on sincere and sacred grounds, it should, though "mutual good offices should cease, yet be free from suspicion "and blame through the whole of life—for the fostering of which "friendship there is not need so much of writing as of a loving "recollection of virtues on the one side and on the other. Nor "even now, should you not have written, would there be a lack "of means for supplying that good office. Your probity writes "with me in your stead and indites true letters on my inmost "heart; your blamelessness of morals writes to me, and your love "of the good; your genius also, by no means a common one, "writes to me, and commends you to me more and more. . . . "Know that it is impossible for me not to love men like you." There is added some talk about Milton's doings. He is thinking, he says, of taking chambers in London, in one of the Inns of Court, having begun to find Horton inconvenient. He has been engaged in a continuous course of historical reading, and has reached the mediæval period. Could Diodati lend him

the History of Venice by Justiniani? And what is Diodati doing? Is he crowing over his medical dignity? Is he troubling himself too much with family matters? Unless this step-motherly war is very bad indeed, worse than Dacian or Sarmatian, may not one hope to see him soon in winter quarters? (*Nisi bellum hoc novercale vel Dacico vel Sarmatico infestius sit, debebis profecto maturare, ut ad nos saltem in hyberna concedas.*) I can only construe this passage as implying that Diodati had recently received a step-mother, and was not much pleased with the acquisition. His father, Dr. Theodore Diodati, after having been some time a widower by the death of Diodati's mother, had married, as I understand, a second wife in his old age. The house of the old physician in Little St. Bartholomew's may not have been so pleasant, therefore, for his son Charles, when he came to town. Charles's brother, however, the younger Theodore, and also a physician, may have taken the matter more easily, or may have had a house of his own. *He* was in London, we learn from Milton's letters, while Charles was in the north.

Seven months after Milton had written these letters to Diodati, he went abroad on his Italian journey (April 1638). It is very possible that he and Diodati may have met in the interval, and talked over the intended tour. Diodati, as half an Italian, and acquainted with the Italian traditions and connexions of his family, may have had hints to give to Milton for his use abroad, or even letters of introduction. At all events, we find Milton, while abroad, thinking much of Diodati. He mentions expressly in his *Defensio Secunda* that, in the second two months he spent at Florence (March and April 1639) he found time for an excursion of "a few days" to Lucca, about forty miles distant; and I suspect that his main motive in the excursion was to see the town whence the Diodati family had derived their origin. Then, again, in one of the Five Italian Love Sonnets, written, as is generally believed, in the north of Italy, towards the end of Milton's Italian tour, we find Diodati directly addressed, and, as it were, taken, though absent, into his friend's confidence in the sudden love-incident that had befallen him (see Introd. to the Italian Sonnets). I feel sure that Milton talked of Diodati, his half-Italian friend at home, to the various groups of Italian wits

and literati in the midst of whom he found himself in the different Italian cities he visited, and especially to his acquaintances of the Florentine group, Gaddi, Dati, Frescobaldi, Coltellini, Chimentelli, Francini, and others. It is not a matter of fancy, but of actual information by Milton himself, that, as he parted from these groups of new friends, and took his way at length back from Italy, homewards, through Switzerland and France, it was with a kind of impatience to meet Diodati again, after so long an absence, so as to pour into his ear, in long sittings within-doors, or in walks together through English fields and country lanes, the connected story of all he had done and seen in the wondrous southern land of olives and myrtles, blue skies and soft winds, art and antiquities, poetry and beauty.

All the more terrible was the shock that awaited Milton. His friend Diodati was no longer alive. He had died very soon after Milton had left England, or in the summer of 1638, though no news of the fact had reached Milton till the Italian part of his tour was completed, or all but completed, and he was on his way back. The news did reach him while he was still on the Continent, and most probably at Geneva, in June 1639; for he tells us that, while there, on his return, he was much in the company of the celebrated theologian, Jean Diodati, the uncle of Charles Diodati (see Introd. to *Elegia Prima*), and it is natural to suppose that the uncle had heard of his nephew's death. Not till Milton was in England, however, did he fully ascertain the particulars. Of these he might be informed by Diodati's father, old Dr. Theodore, or by the surviving brother, young Dr. Theodore. Whatever they were, they impressed Milton greatly. For some time he seems to have gone about, between London and Horton, thinking of little else than Charles Diodati's death. His return to England, his reminiscences of Italy and all the delights of his tour, were saddened and spoiled to him by this one irremediable loss. At length his musings over it take poetic form, and some time in the late autumn of 1639, or in the winter of 1639-40, he writes his *Epitaphium Damonis*.

The poem is, beyond all question, the finest, the deepest in feeling, of all that Milton has left us in Latin, and one of the most interesting of all his poems, whether Latin or English. It

is purely the accident of its being in Latin that has prevented it from being as well known as *Lycidas*, and that has transferred to the subject of that English pastoral, Edward King of Christ's College, Cambridge, the honour of being remembered and spoken of as the preeminent friend of Milton's youth and early manhood. We have already, in the Introduction to *Lycidas*, cautioned against that impression; and the caution must now be repeated even more strongly. Not *Lycidas* but *Damon*, not the Irish-born Edward King, but the half-Italian Charles Diodati, was Milton's dearest, most intimate, most peculiar friend. The records prove this irresistibly, and a careful perusal of the two poems will add to the impression. Whoever will read the Latin *Epitaphium Damonis* will perceive in it a passionateness of personal grief, an evidence of bursts of tears and sobbings interrupting the act of writing, to which there is nothing equivalent in the English *Lycidas*, affectionate and exquisitely beautiful as that poem is. Yet the two poems are, in a sense, companions, and ought to be recollected in connexion. Both are pastorals; in both the form is that of a surviving shepherd bewailing the death of a dear fellow-shepherd. In the one case the dead shepherd is named Lycidas, while the surviving shepherd who mourns him is left unnamed, and only seen at the end as the "uncouth swain" who has been singing; in the other the dead shepherd is named Damon, and Milton, under the name of Thyrsis, is avowedly the shepherd who laments him. The reader may here refer to what has been said, in the Introduction to *Lycidas*, concerning the Pastoral form of Poetry and the objections that have been taken to it. What was said there in defence of the Pastoral form, or in explanation of its real nature, is even more necessary here; for not only is the *Epitaphium Damonis* also a pastoral, but it is a pastoral of the most artificial variety. It is in Latin; and this, in itself, removes it into the realm of the artificial. But, in the Latin, the precedents of the Greek pastoralists, Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, as well as of the Latin Virgil, have been studied, and every device of classic pastoralism has been imitated. There are the sheep, the kids, the reeden flutes, the pastures, the shepherds and shepherdesses wondering at the mourner and coming round him to comfort him; the measure used is the Virgilian Hexameter, and the poem is broken

into musical parts or bursts by a recurring phrase as in some of the Greek Idylls; the names used for the shepherds and shepherdesses are from the Greek Idyllists or from Virgil; the very title of the poem is an echo of that of the third Idyll of Moschus, *Epitaphium Bionis*. All the more strange, to those whose notion of the Pastoral has not gone beyond Dr. Johnson's in his criticism of *Lycidas*, may seem the assertion that in this Latin pastoral, the *Epitaphium Damonis*, the pastoralism of which is more subtle and artificial in every point than that of the corresponding English poem, Milton will be found, undeniably, and with an earnestness which breaks through the assumed guise and thrills the nerves of the reader, speaking his own heart. For my own part, I risk the assertion and will leave the verification to the reader. To the reader also I will leave the pleasure of finding out what is interesting in this extraordinary poem. Only, while he notes the keen and varied expression of Milton's grief and affection for his lost friend, and the mingling of this grief and affection with his recollections of Italy and the new friends he had made there, especially those of the Florentine group and the Neapolitan Manso, let him rest a little, for special reasons, over the memorable passage beginning "*Ipse etiam*" (line 155) and extending to "*Orcades undis*" (line 178). That passage is an important shred of Milton's autobiography. It tells, more minutely, and in a more emphatic manner, what he had already hinted in his Latin poem to Manso, viz.: that at this period of his life his thoughts were full of the project of an Epic poem founded on British legendary History, and especially on the subject of King Arthur. Combined with this glimpse of what was shaping itself in Milton's mind at that time (1639-40) is the farther information that he had then also resolved to give up Latin for the purposes of Poetry, and to confine himself to English.

In both Milton's editions of his Poems the *Epitaphium Damonis* is treated with special typographical respect. In the edition of 1645 it comes last in the volume, and with the title and argument, at the beginning, printed on a right-hand page, so as to separate the poem from the preceding contents. In the edition of 1673 there is the same distinction of title and argument on a separate right-hand page, though in that volume some

additional matter follows the *Epitaphium*. There is proof that the memory of Diodati never faded from Milton's mind. In a Latin letter, among his *Epistolæ Familiares*, dated "London, April 21, 1647," and addressed to his Florentine friend Carlo Dati, the death of Diodati, then nine years past, is mentioned, with peculiar solemnity, as still in his thoughts and ever to be sacredly present there. The similarity of the names of the Carlo Dati so addressed and the Charles Diodati spoken of is very curious; but the reader ought to remember them as two perfectly distinct persons in Milton's Biography.

AD JOANNEM ROUSIUM,

OXONIENSIS ACADEMIÆ BIBLIOTHECARIUM.

JANUARY 23, 1646-7.

(Edition of 1673.)

John Rous, M.A. and Fellow of Oriel College, was elected Chief Librarian of the Bodleian May 9, 1620, and he remained in that post till his death in April 1652. Milton may have become acquainted with him in some visit to Oxford during the Cambridge period of his life, or, at all events, in 1635, when, as a Cambridge M.A. of three years' standing, he was incorporated, in the same degree, at Oxford. It is almost certain that "our common friend Mr. R." mentioned by Sir Henry Wotton in his letter to Milton of April 13, 1638, as having sent to Wotton a copy of Lawes's anonymous edition of *Comus* of the previous year, bound up with a volume of inferior poetry printed at Oxford, was this John Rous, the Oxford Librarian. In any case, Milton had come to know Rous. Who in those days could avoid doing so that had dealings with books, and was drawn to the sight of such a collection of books as that in the great Bodleian? It may have been a recommendation of Rous in Milton's eyes that, Oxonian though he was, his sympathies were decidedly Parliamentarian. Possibly he was a relative of Francis Rous, the Puritan member of the Long Parliament for Truro.

Milton's present verses to Rous are dated by himself "Jan. 23, 1646" (*i.e.* Jan. 23, 1647, as we should now write); and, in his

own extended title, they are designated "*Ad Joannem Rousium, Oxoniensis Academiæ Bibliothecarium: De Libro Poematum amisso, quem ille sibi denuo mitti postulabat, ut cum aliis nostris in Bibliothecâ publicâ reponeret: Ode.*" ("To John Rous, Librarian of the "University of Oxford: concerning a lost Book of Poems, of "which he asked a fresh copy to be sent him, that he might "replace it with others of ours in the public Library: An Ode.") The circumstances here indicated may be explained exactly:—There is still in the Bodleian an old bound volume containing all Milton's pamphlets that had been published before 1645, and the following inscription, indubitably in Milton's own hand, on a blank leaf at the beginning: "*Doctissimo viro, proboque librorum æstimatori, Joanni Rousio, Oxoniensis Academiæ Bibliothecario, gratum hoc sibi fore testanti, Joannes Miltonus opuscula hæc sua, in Bibliothecam antiquissimam atque celeberrimam adsciscenda libens tradit, tanquam in memoriæ perpetuæ fanum, emeritamque, uti sperat, invidiæ calumniæque vacationem, si Veritati Bonoque simul Eventui satis litatum sit. Sunt autem:—De Reformatione Angliæ, Lib.* 2; *De Episcopatu Prælatico, Lib.* 1; *De Ratione Politiæ Ecclesiasticæ, Lib.* 2; *Animadversiones in Remonstrantis Defensionem, Lib.* 1; *Apologia, Lib.* 1; *Doctrina et Disciplina Divortii, Lib.* 2; *Judicium Buceri de Divortio, Lib.* 1; *Colasterion, Lib.* 1; *Tetrachordon, in aliquot præcipua Scripturæ loca de Divortio Instar, Lib.* 4; *Areopagitica, sive de Libertate Typographiæ Oratio; De Educatione Ingenuorum Epistola; Poemata Latina et Anglicana, seorsim.*" ("To "the most learned man and good judge of Books, John Rous, "Librarian of the University of Oxford, on his testifying that this "would be agreeable to him, John Milton gladly gives these "small works of his, to be taken into the most ancient and "celebrated library, as into a temple of perpetual memory, "and so, as he hopes, into a merited freedom from ill-will "and calumny, if satisfaction enough be paid to Truth and at "the same time to Good Fortune. They are—'Of Reformation "in England,' two Books; 'Of Prelatical Episcopacy,' one "Book; 'Of the Reason of Church Government,' two Books; "'Animadversions on the Remonstrant's Defence,' one Book; "'Apology against the same,' one Book; 'The Doctrine and "Discipline of Divorce,' two Books; 'The Judgment of Bucer

"on Divorce,' one Book; 'Colasterion,' one Book; 'Tetra-"chordon, an exposition of some chief places of Scripture con-"cerning Divorce,' four Books; 'Areopagitica, or a Speech for the "Freedom of the Press;' 'An Epistle on Liberal Education;' and "'Latin and English Poems,' separate.") This inscription tells the story so far. Milton, at Rous's request, had sent him, for the Bodleian, in 1646, a set of his published writings complete to that date; to wit, the eleven controversial Prose-pamphlets of 1641-4, and the edition of his Poems in English and Latin published by Moseley in the end of 1645. Of these, however, only the Prose-pamphlets had reached their destination; the Poems had been lost or stolen on their way to Oxford, or had otherwise gone astray. Rous, accordingly, both in his own behalf and in the interest of the Library, begs for another copy, to make the set of Milton's writings complete, as had been intended. Milton complies with the request, and sends a second copy of the Poems. But, amused by the incident of the loss of the first, he composes a Latin Ode on the subject; and a transcript of this Ode, carefully written out on a sheet of paper by himself, or some one else, in an Italian hand, he causes to be inserted in the second copy, between the English and the Latin contents of the volume. Accordingly, there are now in the Bodleian *two* volumes of Milton's writings, his own gift to the Library. One is the volume of the eleven collected Prose-pamphlets enumerated above, and with the inscription above copied, in Milton's undoubted autograph; the other is the supplementary volume of his Poems, sent to Rous, "*ut cum aliis nostris reponeret*" ("that he might replace it beside our other things"), and containing the Ode to Rous in an inserted sheet of MS., generally supposed to be also Milton's autograph, in an unusual form of laboured elegance, but probably, I think, a transcript by some calligraphist whom he employed. If Warton's story is true, there was a danger, about 1720, that these two volumes would be lost to the Bodleian. With a number of other small volumes, chiefly duplicates, they were thrown aside; and Mr. Nathaniel Crynes, then one of the Esquire Bedels, and a book-collector, was allowed to pick what he chose out of the heap, on the understanding that he was to bestow some equivalent on the Library in the form of a bequest. By good

luck Mr. Crynes did not care for the two Milton volumes, and so they went back to the Library. Even had they disappeared, however, we should still have had the Ode to Rous. Milton had kept a copy of it, and had added it to his Latin Poems in the edition of 1673.

The Ode is a curious one, in respect of both its form and its matter.—The *form*, as Milton takes care to explain in a note (appended in his edition, though now more conveniently prefixed), is peculiarly arbitrary. It is a kind of experiment in Latin, after few classical precedents in that language, of the mixed verse, or verse of various metres, common in the Greek choral odes. Even within that range Milton has taken liberties at the bidding of his own ear, paying regard, as he says, rather to facility of reading than to ancient rule. Hence, for example, the Phalæcian or Hendecasyllabic lines introduced will be found exceedingly irregular. Altogether, the experiment was rather daring.—The *matter* of the ode is simple enough. It is addressed not directly to Rous, but to the little volume itself. The double contents of the volume, Latin and English, are spoken of in modest terms; the loss of the first copy, mysteriously abstracted from the bundle of its brothers, when they were on their way from London to Oxford, is playfully mentioned, with wonder what had become of it and into what rough hands it may have fallen; Rous's friendly interest, both in having repeatedly applied at first for the whole set of writings and in having applied again for the missing volume, is acknowledged; and there are the due applauses of Oxford and her great Library. In this last connexion there is an amplification of what had been hinted in the inscription in the volume of the Prose-pamphlets. The time would come, he had there hoped, when even his Prose-pamphlets, now procuring him nothing but ill-will and calumny, might be better appreciated. This hope he now repeats more strongly with reference to his Poems. The following is Cowper's translation of the Epode, or closing strain:—

"Ye, then, my works, no longer vain
And worthless deemed by me,
Whate'er this sterile genius has produced,
Expect at last, the rage of envy spent,
An unmolested, happy home,

Gift of kind Hermes, and my watchful friend,
Where never flippant tongue profane
Shall entrance find,
And whence the coarse unlettered multitude
Shall babble far remote.
Perhaps some future distant age,
Less tinged with prejudice, and better taught,
Shall furnish minds of power
To judge more equally.
Then, malice silenced in the tomb,
Cooler heads and sounder hearts,
Thanks to Rous, if aught of praise
I merit, shall with candour weigh the claim."

EPIGRAMS ON SALMASIUS.

Salmasius is a great name in the Biography of Milton. The person called by it, according to the custom, then common in the scholarly world of Europe, of Latinizing the names of its important members, was Claude de Saumaise, a Frenchman, born in 1588, and therefore Milton's senior by about twenty years. From his earliest youth he had been a prodigious reader; and by a series of publications, partly in France and partly in Germany, some against the Papal power, but others more purely historical and antiquarian, he had acquired the fame of being perhaps the most learned European scholar of his generation. Princes and States contended for the honour of possessing and pensioning him; but, after various travels, he had taken up his residence chiefly at Leyden, in Holland. Thus brought into contact with Charles II. and the English Royalist exiles after the execution of Charles I., he had been employed or induced, in an evil hour for himself, to write a defence of the late King and an attack on the English Commonwealth. It appeared in Holland in 1649, under the title of *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I.* A book of the kind by a man of his fame was felt in England to be a serious matter; and Milton, then Foreign Secretary to the Council of State, was requested to answer it. He did so in his famous *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano contra Claudii Salmasii Defensionem Regiam*, published in the end of 1650, or beginning of 1651. Soon all Europe rang from side to side with the power of this pamphlet;

and the legend is that Salmasius, who had recently gone to reside at the Court of Sweden on the pressing invitation of the eccentric Queen Christina, was so chagrined at the applause with which the pamphlet was everywhere received, and especially by Christina's consequent coldness to himself, that he soon afterwards died. He did quit Sweden, and return to Holland, where he died Sept. 3, 1653, leaving an unfinished reply to Milton, and the task of continuing the controversy to other persons. Among these was the Gallo-Scot, Alexander More or Morus, already mentioned in the introduction to the brief epigram *De Moro* among the Latin Elegies. Milton's *Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano*, published in 1654, was in reply to a treatise of the same year, which More was supposed to have written, but which he had only seen through the press, entitled *Regii Sanguinis Clamor adversus Parricidas Anglicanos*. In this "Second Defence," though More was the person directly attacked, Milton went back upon his dead opponent Salmasius. Hence, while the first of the two Epigrams against Salmasius now under notice is from the original pamphlet against the living Salmasius (called now, generally, the *Defensio Prima*), the second is from the *Defensio Secunda*, in which More receives the direct attack and Salmasius is only recollected for posthumous chastisement.

In Salmasii Hundredam.—This Epigram occurs in the 8th chapter of the *Defensio Prima*, and is a rough jest against Salmasius for his parade of his knowledge of a few English law-terms, or terms of public custom, such as "County Court," and "Hundred" or "Hundreda," in the sense of a division of a shire or an aggregation of parishes. "Where did Salmasius, that magpie, get his scraps of bad English, and especially his *Hundreda*?" asks the Epigram. "Why, he got a hundred Jaco-"buses, the last in the pouch of the poor exiled King, for writing "his pamphlet! The prospect of more cash would make him write "up the very Pope, and sing the Song of the Cardinals, though he "once demonstrated the Papacy to be Antichrist." Such is the substance of the Epigram; a poor thing after all, and a mere momentary parody of the last seven lines of the Prologue to the Satires of Persius. They may be given here for the sake of comparison:—

"Quis expedivit psittaco suum χαῖρε,
Picasque docuit verba nostra conari?
Magister artis ingenique largitor
Venter, negatas artifex sequi voces.
Quod si dolosi spes refulserit nummi,
Corvos poetas et poetrias picas
Cantare credas Pegaseium nectar."

IN SALMASIUM.—This is from the *Defensio Secunda*, where it is introduced in a passage in reply to an immense eulogy on Salmasius occurring in the *Sanguinis Clamor*. The writer of that book, assumed by Milton to be Alexander More, had anticipated the tremendous castigation that would be given to Milton in the forthcoming "impression" of the answer to the *Defensio Prima* that had been written by the divine Salmasius himself, that prodigy of erudition and of genius. Milton professes to be very easy under the expectation of this posthumous reply, which he knew Salmasius had been busy with at the time of his death. People know that he has his own opinion of the genius and erudition of the famous deceased. "You, therefore, it seems," he says, addressing More, "are like the little client-fish in advance "of Whale Salmasius, who is threatening 'impressions' on these "shores: *we* are sharpening our irons so as to be ready to "squeeze out whatever may be in the 'impressions' and 'castiga-"tions,' whether of oil or pickle. Meanwhile we shall admire the "more than Pythagorean goodness of the great man, who, in his "pity for the animals, and especially for the fishes, which are not "spared even in Lent, poor things, has provided so many volumes "for decently wrapping them up in, has bequeathed by will, I "may say, to so many thousands of poor sprats and herrings "paper coats individually." After this ponderous piece of Latin prose-fun comes the Epigram. It simply prolongs the joke, in verse which is a cross between Catullus and Martial, by calling on all the herrings and other fishes to rejoice in their prospect of abundant paper wrappages from the books of Salmasius. Milton was rather fond of this particular scurrility; for, as Warton pointed out, he had already used it in his *Apology for Smectymnuus* against his antagonist in that pamphlet: "whose best folios are predestined to no better purpose than to making winding-sheets in Lent for pilchards."

POEMS:

ENGLISH AND LATIN,

WITH A FEW IN ITALIAN AND GREEK.

COMPOSED AT SEVERAL TIMES.

POEMS, ENGLISH AND LATIN, ETC.

The title-pages of the two original Editions, of 1645 and 1673, have been given in the General Introduction (p. 166 and pp. 172–3). The Second Edition had no Preface; but the First had the following, by the publisher, Humphrey Moseley:—

"THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

"It is not any private respect of gain, Gentle Reader (for the slightest Pamphlet is nowadays more vendible than the works of learnedest men), but it is the love I have to our own Language that hath made me diligent to collect and set forth such Pieces, both in Prose and Verse, as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our English tongue; and it's the worth of these both English and Latin Poems, not the flourish of any prefixed encomions, that can invite thee to buy them—though these are not without the highest commendations and applause of the learnedest Academicks, both domestic and foreign, and, amongst those of our own country, the unparalleled attestation of that renowned Provost of Eton, SIR HENRY WOOTTON. I know not thy palate, how it relishes such dainties, nor how harmonious thy soul is: perhaps more trivial Airs may please thee better. But, howsoever thy opinion is spent upon these, that encouragement I have already received from the most ingenious men, in their clear and courteous entertainment of MR. WALLER'S late choice Pieces, hath once more made me adventure into the world, presenting it with these ever-green and not to be blasted laurels. The Author's more peculiar excellency in these studies was too well known to conceal his Papers, or to keep me from attempting to solicit them from him. Let the event guide itself which way it will, I shall deserve of the age by bringing into the light as true a birth as the Muses have brought forth since our famous SPENSER wrote; whose Poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated as sweetly excelled. Reader, if thou art eagle-eyed to censure their worth, I am not fearful to expose them to thy exactest perusal.

"Thine to command,

"HUMPH. MOSELEY."

PART I.

THE ENGLISH POEMS.

ENGLISH POEMS.

A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXIV.

This and the following Psalm were done by the Author at fifteen years old (1624).

WHEN the blest seed of Terah's faithful son
After long toil their liberty had won,
And passed from Pharian fields to Canaan-land,
Led by the strength of the Almighty's hand,
Jehovah's wonders were in Israel shown,
His praise and glory was in Israel known.
That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled,
And sought to hide his froth-becurlèd head
Low in the earth; Jordan's clear streams recoil,
As a faint host that hath received the foil.
The high huge-bellied mountains skip like rams
Amongst their ewes, the little hills like lambs.
Why fled the ocean? and why skipped the mountains?
Why turnèd Jordan toward his crystal fountains?
Shake, Earth, and at the presence be aghast
Of Him that ever was and aye shall last,
That glassy floods from rugged rocks can crush,
And make soft rills from fiery flint-stones gush.

PSALM CXXXVI.

LET us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for he is kind;
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us blaze his name abroad,
For of gods he is the God;
For his, &c.

O let us his praises tell,
Who doth the wrathful tyrants quell;
For his, &c.

Who with his miracles doth make
Amazed heaven and earth to shake;
For his, &c.

Who by his wisdom did create
The painted heavens so full of state;
For his, &c.

Who did the solid earth ordain
To rise above the watery plain;
For his, &c.

Who, by his all-commanding might,
Did fill the new-made world with light;
For his, &c.

And caused the golden-tressèd sun
All the day long his course to run;
For his, &c.

The hornèd moon to shine by night
Amongst her spangled sisters bright;
For his, &c.

He, with his thunder-clasping hand,
Smote the first-born of Egypt land;
For his, &c.

And, in despite of Pharao fell,
He brought from thence his Israel;
For his, &c.

The ruddy waves he cleft in twain
Of the Erythræan main;
For his, &c.

The floods stood still, like walls of glass,
While the Hebrew bands did pass;
For his, &c.

But full soon they did devour
The tawny king with all his power;
For his, &c.

His chosen people he did bless
In the wasteful wilderness;
For his, &c.

In bloody battle he brought down
Kings of prowess and renown;
For his, &c.

He foiled bold Seon and his host,
That ruled the Amorrean coast;
For his, &c.

And large-limbed Og he did subdue,
With all his over-hardy crew;
For his, &c.

And to his servant Israel
He gave their land, therein to dwell;
For his, &c.

He hath, with a piteous eye,
Beheld us in our misery;
For his, &c.

And freed us from the slavery
Of the invading enemy;
For his, &c.

All living creatures he doth feed,
And with full hand supplies their need;
For his, &c.

Let us, therefore, warble forth
His mighty majesty and worth;
For his, &c.

That his mansion hath on high,
Above the reach of mortal eye;
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT DYING OF A COUGH.

Anno ætatis 17 (1626).

I.

O FAIREST flower, no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak Winter's force that made thy blossom dry;
For he, being amorous on that lovely dye
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,
But killed, alas! and then bewailed his fatal bliss.

II.

For, since grim Aquilo, his charioteer,
By boisterous rape the Athenian damsel got,
He thought it touched his deity full near,
If likewise he some fair one wedded not,
Thereby to wipe away the infámous blot
  Of long uncoupled bed and childless eld,
Which 'mongst the wanton gods a foul reproach was held.

III.

So, mounting up in icy-pearlèd car,
Through middle empire of the freezing air
He wandered long, till thee he spied from far;
There ended was his quest, there ceased his care:
Down he descended from his snow-soft chair,
  But, all unwares, with his cold-kind embrace,
Unhoused thy virgin soul from her fair biding-place.

IV.

Yet art thou not inglorious in thy fate;
For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,
Whilom did slay his dearly-lovèd mate,
Young Hyacinth, born on Eurotas' strand,
Young Hyacinth, the pride of Spartan land;
  But then transformed him to a purple flower:
Alack, that so to change thee Winter had no power!

V.

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
Hid from the world in a low-delvèd tomb;
Could Heaven, for pity, thee so strictly doom?
  Oh no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that showed thou wast divine.

VI.

Resolve me, then, O Soul most surely blest
(If so it be that thou these plaints dost hear)!
Tell me, bright Spirit, where'er thou hoverest,
Whether above that high first-moving sphere,
Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were),
  Oh, say me true if thou wert mortal wight,
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight.

VII.

Wert thou some star, which from the ruined roof
Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall;
Which careful Jove in nature's true behoof
Took up, and in fit place did reinstal?
Or did of late Earth's sons besiege the wall
  Of sheeny Heaven, and thou some goddess fled
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head?

VIII.

Or wert thou that just Maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth, oh! tell me sooth,
And camest again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou [Mercy], that sweet smiling Youth?
Or that crowned Matron, sage white-robèd Truth?
  Or any other of that heavenly brood
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

IX.

Or wert thou of the golden-wingèd host,
Who, having clad thyself in human weed,
To earth from thy prefixèd seat didst post,
And after short abode fly back with speed,
As if to show what creatures Heaven doth breed;
  Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heaven aspire?

X.

But oh! why didst thou not stay here below
To bless us with thy heaven-loved innocence,
To slake his wrath whom sin hath made our foe,
To turn swift-rushing black perdition hence,
Or drive away the slaughtering pestilence,
  To stand 'twixt us and our deserved smart?
But thou canst best perform that office where thou art.

XI.

Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,
Her false-imagined loss cease to lament,
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild;
Think what a present thou to God hast sent,
And render him with patience what he lent:
  This if thou do, he will an offspring give
That till the world's last end shall make thy name to live.

AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE, PART LATIN, PART ENGLISH.

Anno ætatis 19 (1628).

The Latin Speeches ended, the English thus began:—

HAIL, Native Language, that by sinews weak
Didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak,
And mad'st imperfect words with childish trips,
Half unpronounced, slide through my infant lips,
Driving dumb Silence from the portal door,
Where he had mutely sat two years before:
Here I salute thee, and thy pardon ask
That now I use thee in my latter task!

Small loss it is that thence can come unto thee;
I know my tongue but little grace can do thee.
Thou need'st not be ambitious to be first;
Believe me, I have thither packed the worst:
And, if it happen as I did forecast,
The daintiest dishes shall be served up last.
I pray thee then deny me not thy aid,
For this same small neglect that I have made;
But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure;
Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight
Which takes our late fantastics with delight;
But cull those richest robes and gayest attire,
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.
I have some naked thoughts that rove about,
And loudly knock to have their passage out,
And, weary of their place, do only stay
Till thou hast decked them in thy best array;
That so they may, without suspect or fears,
Fly swiftly to this fair assembly's ears.
Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
Thy service in some graver subject use,
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound:
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire;
Then, passing through the spheres of watchful fire,
And misty regions of wide air next under,
And hills of snow and lofts of piled thunder,

May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,
In heaven's defiance mustering all his waves;
Then sing of secret things that came to pass
When beldam Nature in her cradle was;
And last of kings and queens and heroes old,
Such as the wise Demodocus once told
In solemn songs at king Alcinous' feast,
While sad Ulysses' soul and all the rest
Are held, with his melodious harmony,
In willing chains and sweet captivity.
But fie, my wandering Muse, how thou dost stray!
Expectance calls thee now another way.
Thou know'st it must be now thy only bent
To keep in compass of thy Predicament.
Then quick about thy purposed business come,
That to the next I may resign my room.

Then ENS *is represented as Father of the Predicaments, his ten Sons; whereof the eldest stood for* SUBSTANCE *with his Canons; which* ENS, *thus speaking, explains :—*

Good luck befriend thee, Son; for at thy birth
The faery ladies danced upon the hearth.
Thy drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spy
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie,
And, sweetly singing round about thy bed,
Strew all their blessings on thy sleeping head.
She heard them give thee this, that thou should'st still
From eyes of mortals walk invisible.
Yet there is something that doth force my fear;
For once it was my dismal hap to hear
A sibyl old, bow-bent with crooked age,
That far events full wisely could presage,
And, in Time's long and dark prospective-glass,
Foresaw what future days should bring to pass.

"Your son," said she, "(nor can you it prevent)
Shall subject be to many an *Accident*.
O'er all his brethren he shall reign as king;
Yet every one shall make him underling,
And those that cannot live from him asunder
Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under.
In worth and excellence he shall outgo them;
Yet, being above them, he shall be below them.
From others he shall stand in need of nothing,
Yet on his brothers shall depend for clothing.
To find a foe it shall not be his hap,
And peace shall lull him in her flowery lap;
Yet shall he live in strife, and at his door
Devouring war shall never cease to roar;
Yea, it shall be his natural property
To harbour those that are at enmity."
What power, what force, what mighty spell, if not
Your learned hands, can loose this Gordian knot?

The next, QUANTITY *and* QUALITY, *spake in prose: then* RELATION *was called by his name.*

Rivers, arise: whether thou be the son
Of utmost Tweed, or Ouse, or gulfy Dun,
Or Trent, who, like some earth-born giant, spreads
His thirty arms along the indented meads,
Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath,
Or Severn swift, guilty of maiden's death,
Or rocky Avon, or of sedgy Lea,
Or coaly Tyne, or ancient hallowed Dee,
Or Humber loud, that keeps the Scythian's name,
Or Medway smooth, or royal-towered Thame.

The rest was prose.

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

Composed 1629.

I.

THIS is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing,
  That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II.

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,
  Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III.

Say, Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the heaven, by the Sun's team untrod,
  Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV.

See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet!
Oh! run; prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

THE HYMN.

I.

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

II.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

III.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace:

She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

IV.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hookèd chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

V.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began.
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

VI.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;

But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

VII.

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need:
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

VIII.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they than
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

IX.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

X.

Nature, that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat the Airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

XI.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced Night arrayed;
The helmèd cherubim
And sworded seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

XII.

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,

If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

XIV.

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

XV.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

XVI.

But wisest Fate says No,
This must not yet be so;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify:

Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

XVII.

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:
The aged Earth, aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

XVIII.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The Old Dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX.

The Oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

XX.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

XXI.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

XXII.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered god of Palestine;
And moonèd Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine:
The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

XXIII.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread

His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

XXIV.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain, with timbreled anthems dark,
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshiped ark.

XXV.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

XXVI.

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,

And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

XXVII.

But see! the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION.

YE flaming Powers, and wingèd Warriors bright,
That erst with music, and triumphant song,
First heard by happy watchful shepherds' ear,
So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along,
Through the soft silence of the listening night,
Now mourn; and, if sad share with us to bear
Your fiery essence can distil no tear,
Burn in your sighs, and borrow
Seas wept from our deep sorrow.
He who with all Heaven's heraldry whilere
Entered the world now bleeds to give us ease.
Alas! how soon our sin
Sore doth begin
His infancy to seize!

O more exceeding love, or law more just?
Just law, indeed, but more exceeding love!

For we, by rightful doom remediless,
Were lost in death, till he, that dwelt above
High-throned in secret bliss, for us frail dust
Emptied his glory, even to nakedness;
And that great covenant which we still transgress
Entirely satisfied,
And the full wrath beside
Of vengeful justice bore for our excess,
And seals obedience first with wounding smart
This day; but oh! ere long,
  Huge pangs and strong
    Will pierce more near his heart.

THE PASSION.

Erewhile of music, and ethereal mirth,
Wherewith the stage of Air and Earth did ring,
And joyous news of heavenly Infant's birth,
My muse with Angels did divide to sing;
But headlong joy is ever on the wing,
  In wintry solstice like the shortened light
Soon swallowed up in dark and long outliving night.

II.

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
And set my harp to notes of saddest woe,
Which on our dearest Lord did seize ere long,
Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,
Which he for us did freely undergo:
  Most perfect Hero, tried in heaviest plight
Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight!

III.

He, sovran Priest, stooping his regal head,
That dropt with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly tabernacle enterèd,
His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies:
Oh, what a mask was there, what a disguise!
Yet more: the stroke of death he must abide;
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side.

IV.

These latest scenes confine my roving verse;
To this horizon is my Phœbus bound.
His godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
And former sufferings, otherwhere are found;
Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump doth sound:
Me softer airs befit, and softer strings
Of lute, or viol still, more apt for mournful things.

V.

Befriend me, Night, best patroness of grief!
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flattered fancy to belief
That heaven and earth are coloured with my woe;
My sorrows are too dark for day to know:
The leaves should all be black whereon I write,
And letters, where my tears have washed, a wannish white.

VI.

See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels,
That whirled the prophet up at Chebar flood;
My spirit some transporting cherub feels
To bear me where the towers of Salem stood,
Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood.
There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit.

VII.

Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock
That was the casket of Heaven's richest store,
And here, though grief my feeble hands up-lock,
Yet on the softened quarry would I score
My plaining verse as lively as before;
  For sure so well instructed are my tears
That they would fitly fall in ordered characters.

VIII.

Or, should I thence, hurried on viewless wing,
Take up a weeping on the mountains wild,
The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild;
And I (for grief is easily beguiled)
  Might think the infection of my sorrows loud
Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.

This Subject the Author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished.

ON TIME.

FLY, envious Time, till thou run out thy race:
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping Hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain!
For, whenas each thing bad thou hast entombed,
And, last of all, thy greedy self consumed,

Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss,
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood;
When every thing that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
About the supreme throne
Of Him, to whose happy-making sight alone
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this earthy grossness quit,
Attired with stars we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time!

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC.

BLEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbèd song of pure concent,
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly:
That we on Earth, with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer that melodious noise;

As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
To his celestial consort us unite,
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light

SONG ON MAY MORNING.

Now the bright morning-star, Day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
    Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
    Mirth, and youth, and warm desire!
    Woods and groves are of thy dressing;
    Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

ON SHAKESPEARE. 1630.

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pilèd stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?

Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make *us* marble with too much conceiving,
And so sepúlchred in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER,

Who sickened in the time of his Vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the Plague.

HERE lies old Hobson. Death hath broke his girt,
And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;
Or else, the ways being foul, twenty to one
He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter that, if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down;
For he had any time this ten years full
Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and *The Bull.*
And surely Death could never have prevailed,
Had not his weekly course of carriage failed;
But lately, finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey's end was come,
And that he had ta'en up his latest inn,
In the kind office of a chamberlin
Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pulled off his boots, and took away the light.
If any ask for him, it shall be said,
"Hobson has supped, and's newly gone to bed."

ANOTHER ON THE SAME.

HERE lieth one who did most truly prove
That he could never die while he could move;
So hung his destiny, never to rot
While he might still jog on and keep his trot;
Made of sphere-metal, never to decay
Until his revolution was at stay.
Time numbers motion, yet (without a crime
'Gainst old truth) motion numbered out his time;
And, like an engine moved with wheel and weight,
His principles being ceased, he ended straight.
Rest, that gives all men life, gave him his death,
And too much breathing put him out of breath;
Nor were it contradiction to affirm
Too long vacation hastened on his term.
Merely to drive the time away he sickened,
Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quickened.
"Nay," quoth he, on his swooning bed outstretched,
"If I mayn't carry, sure I'll ne'er be fetched,
But vow, though the cross doctors all stood hearers,
For one carrier put down to make six bearers."
Ease was his chief disease; and, to judge right,
He died for heaviness that his cart went light.
His leisure told him that his time was come,
And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That even to his last breath (there be that say't),
As he were pressed to death, he cried, "More weight!"
But, had his doings lasted as they were,
He had been an immortal carrier.
Obedient to the moon he spent his date
In course reciprocal, and had his fate

Linked to the mutual flowing of the seas;
Yet (strange to think) his wain was his increase.
His letters are delivered all and gone;
Only remains this superscription.

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER.

THIS rich marble doth inter
The honoured wife of Winchester,
A Viscount's daughter, an Earl's heir,
Besides what her virtues fair
Added to her noble birth,
More than she could own from Earth.
Summers three times eight save one
She had told; alas! too soon,
After so short time of breath,
To house with darkness and with death!
Yet, had the number of her days
Been as complete as was her praise,
Nature and Fate had had no strife
In giving limit to her life.
Her high birth and her graces sweet
Quickly found a lover meet;
The virgin quire for her request
The god that sits at marriage-feast;
He at their invoking came,
But with a scarce well-lighted flame;
And in his garland, as he stood,
Ye might discern a cypress-bud.
Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son,

And now with second hope she goes,
And calls Lucina to her throes;
But, whether by mischance or blame,
Atropos for Lucina came,
And with remorseless cruelty
Spoiled at once both fruit and tree.
The hapless babe before his birth
Had burial, not yet laid in earth;
And the languished mother's womb
Was not long a living tomb.
So have I seen some tender slip,
Saved with care from winter's nip,
The pride of her carnation train,
Plucked up by some unheedy swain,
Who only thought to crop the flower
New shot up from vernal shower;
But the fair blossom hangs the head
Sideways, as on a dying bed,
And those pearls of dew she wears
Prove to be presaging tears
Which the sad morn had let fall
On her hastening funeral.
Gentle Lady, may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have!
After this thy travail sore,
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That, to give the world increase,
Shortened hast thy own life's lease!
Here, besides the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
Weept for thee in Helicon;
And some flowers and some bays
For thy hearse, to strew the ways,

Sent thee from the banks of Came,
Devoted to thy virtuous name;
Whilst thou, bright Saint, high sitt'st in glory,
Next her, much like to thee in story,
That fair Syrian shepherdess,
Who, after years of barrenness,
The highly-favoured Joseph bore
To him that served for her before,
And at her next birth, much like thee,
Through pangs fled to felicity,
Far within the bosom bright
Of blazing Majesty and Light:
There with thee, new-welcome Saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.

L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,
  Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
  'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
  Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
  There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
  In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,

And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,

Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.

Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear

Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.

Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure,
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak

Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,

Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,

Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,

In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.

ARCADES

PART OF AN ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTED TO THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF DERBY AT HAREFIELD BY SOME NOBLE PERSONS OF HER FAMILY; WHO APPEAR ON THE SCENE IN PASTORAL HABIT, MOVING TOWARD THE SEAT OF STATE, WITH THIS SONG:

I. *Song.*

LOOK, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?
  This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.

Fame, that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:
  Less than half we find expressed;
  Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne
Shooting her beams like silver threads:
This, this is she alone,
  Sitting like a goddess bright
  In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towered Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds:
  Who had thought this clime had held
  A deity so unparalleled?

As they come forward, THE GENIUS OF THE WOOD appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.

Gen. Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes ;
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renownèd flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who, by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse ;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskined Nymphs, as great and good.
I know this quest of yours and free intent
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
And with all helpful service will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity,
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold ;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon.
For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove ;
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds and blasting vapours chill ;
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,
Or hurtful worm with cankered venom bites.
When evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground ;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn

Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasselled horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words and murmurs made to bless.
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear.
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
The peerless height of her immortal praise
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferior hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,
Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state ;
Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. *Song.*

O'er the smooth enamelled green,
Where no print of step hath been,
  Follow me, as I sing

And touch the warbled string ;
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm star-proof
Follow me.
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendour as befits
Her deity.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. *Song.*

Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more
By sandy Ladon's lilied banks ;
On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks ;
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,
A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us ;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the Lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

COMUS.

"A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, &C."

(For the title-pages of the Editions of 1637 and 1645 see Introduction at p. 244 and p. 246.)

DEDICATION OF THE ANONYMOUS EDITION OF 1637.

(Reprinted in the Edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673.)

"*To the Right Honourable John, Lord Brackley, son and heir-apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, &c.*

"My Lord,

"This Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a final dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the Author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view, and now to offer it up, in all rightful devotion, to those fair hopes and rare endowments of your much-promising youth, which give a full assurance to all that know you of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name; and receive this as your own from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured Parents, and, as in this representation your attendant *Thyrsis*, so now in all real expression

"Your faithful and most humble Servant,

"H. LAWES."

"*The Copy of a Letter written by Sir Henry Wotton to the Author upon the following Poem.*"

(In the Edition of 1645: omitted in that of 1673.)

"From the College, this 13 of April, 1638.

"Sir,

"It was a special favour when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it and to enjoy it rightly; and, in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. H., I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your said learned friend, over a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together some good Authors of the ancient time; among which I observed you to have been familiar.

"Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kind letter from you dated the 6th of this month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your Songs and Odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities.* But I must not omit to tell you that I now only owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed some good while before with singular delight; having received it from our common friend Mr. R., in the very close of the late R.'s Poems, printed at Oxford: whereunto it was added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of Stationers, and to leave the reader *con la bocca dolce.*

"Now, Sir, concerning your travels; wherein I may challenge a little more privilege of discourse with you. I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way: therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B., whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S. as his governor; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your

farther journey into Italy, where he did reside, by my choice, some time for the King, after mine own recess from Venice.

"I should think that your best line will be through the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa; whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge. I hasten, as you do, to Florence or Siena, the rather to tell you a short story, from the interest you have given me in your safety.

"At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni, an old Roman courtier in dangerous times; having been steward to the Duca di Pagliano, who with all his amily were strangled, save this only man that escaped by foresight of the tempest. With him I had often much chat of those affairs, into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and, at my departure toward Rome (which had been the centre of his experience), I had won his confidence enough to beg his advice how I might carry myself there without offence of others or of mine own conscience. '*Signor Arrigo mio*,' says he, '*I pensieri stretti ed il viso sciolto* will go safely over the whole world.' Of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgment doth need no commentary; and therefore, Sir, I will commit you, with it, to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining

"Your friend, as much to command as
any of longer date,
"HENRY WOTTON."

Postscript.

"Sir: I have expressly sent this my footboy to prevent your departure without some acknowledgment from me of the receipt of your obliging letter; having myself through some business, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad and diligent to entertain you with home-novelties, even for some fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the cradle."

THE PERSONS.

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.
COMUS, with his Crew.
THE LADY.
FIRST BROTHER.
SECOND BROTHER.
SABRINA, the Nymph.

The Chief Persons which presented were:—

The Lord Brackley;
Mr. Thomas Egerton, his Brother;
The Lady Alice Egerton.

[This list of the Persons, &c., appeared in the Edition of 1645, but was omitted in that of 1673.]

COMUS.

The first Scene discovers a wild wood.

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in, by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd bosom of the deep;
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,

The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-haired deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatched for their defence and guard:
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,

And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky-robes, spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,

Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out;
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
From her cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains: I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;

Which must not be, for that's against my course.
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may her business hear.

The LADY *enters.*

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side,
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain,

But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassailed. . . . .
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,

And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song.

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,

Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.
Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lady. Dim darkness and this leavy labyrinth.
Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?
Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.
Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.
Comus. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.
Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!
Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
Lady. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips.
Comus. Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked hedger at his supper sat.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood.
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,
And, as I passed, I worshiped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them.
Lady. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.
Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.

Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on. . . . .

The TWO BROTHERS.

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.
Sec. Bro. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, Oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her

From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!
Eld. Bro. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

Sec. Bro. 'Tis most true
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his grey hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned sister.
Eld. Bro. I do not, brother,
Infer as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion.
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.

Sec. Bro. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?
Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin or swart faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,

But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.
Sec. Bro. How charming is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.
Eld. Bro. List! list! I hear
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.
Sec. Bro. Methought so too; what should it be?

Eld. Bro. For certain,
Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.
Sec. Bro. Heaven keep my sister! Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
Eld. Bro. I'll hallo.
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd.*

That hallo I should know. What are you? speak.
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.
Spir. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.
Sec. Bro. O brother, 'tis my father's Shepherd, sure.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?
Spir. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
Eld. Bro. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
Eld. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.
Spir. I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous

(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell ;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
  Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
Charactered in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,

Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,
'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!'
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

Sec. Bro. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?
Eld. Bro. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.
Spir. Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must

Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.
Eld. Bro. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?
Spir. Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing:
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
He called it Hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies' apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true; for by this means

I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him; break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us!

The Scene changes to a stately Palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and* THE LADY *set in an enchanted chair: to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.
Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,

With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.
Lady. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored falsehood and base forgery?
And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched the all-worshiped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,

But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.
Lady. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;

And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say;—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.
  Comus. She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no more!
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.

I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste . . . .

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in.*

Spir. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodil,

And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialed liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song.

Sabrina fair,
  Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
  In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
  Listen for dear honour's sake,
  Goddess of the silver lake,
    Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus,
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace;

By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringèd bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!

Spir. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distressed
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
Sabr Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnared chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

SABRINA *descends, and* THE LADY *rises out of her seat.*

Spir. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,
May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singed air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;

May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
  Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
He shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then come in Country Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the two* BROTHERS *and* THE LADY.

Song.

Spir. Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod

Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguizes.*

Spir. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.

Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced
Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done:
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

LYCIDAS.

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour *my* destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;

Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there," . . for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,

The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
  Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
  O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,
That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?

And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread ;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
  Return, Alpheus ; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams ; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears ;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,
Ay me ! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled ;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world ;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,

Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
  Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

  Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

SONNETS.

I.

[TO THE NIGHTINGALE.]

O NIGHTINGALE that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

II.

[ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.]

HOW soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.

Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
    It shall be still in strictest measure even
    To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
    All is, if I have grace to use it so,
    As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

III.

DONNA leggiadra, il cui bel nome onora
    L' erbosa val di Reno e il nobil varco,
    Bene è colui d' ogni valore scarco
    Qual tuo spirto gentil non innamora,
Che dolcemente mostrasi di fuora,
    De' sui atti soavi giammai parco,
    E i don', che son d' amor saette ed arco,
    Là onde l' alta tua virtù s'infiora.
Quando tu vaga parli, o lieta canti,
    Che mover possa duro alpestre legno,
    Guardi ciascun agli occhi ed agli orecchi
L' entrata chi di te si truova indegno;
    Grazia sola di sù gli vaglia, innanti
    Che 'l disio amoroso al cuor s' invecchi.

IV.

QUAL in colle aspro, all' imbrunir di sera,
    L' avezza giovinetta pastorella
    Va bagnando l' erbetta strana e bella
    Che mal si spande a disusata spera
Fuor di sua natia alma primavera,
    Così Amor meco insù la lingua snella
    Desta il fior novo di strania favella,
    Mentre io di te, vezzosamente altera,

Canto, dal mio buon popol non inteso,
E 'l bel Tamigi cangio col bell' Arno.
Amor lo volse, ed io all' altrui peso
Seppi ch' Amor cosa mai volse indarno.
Deh! foss' il mio cuor lento e 'l duro seno
A chi pianta dal ciel si buon terreno.

CANZONE.

RIDONSI donne e giovani amorosi
M' accostandosi attorno, e 'Perchè scrivi,
Perchè tu scrivi in lingua ignota e strana
Verseggiando d' amor, e come t' osi?
Dinne, se la tua speme sia mai vana,
E de' pensieri lo miglior t' arrivi!'
Così mi van burlando: 'altri rivi,
Altri lidi t' aspettan, ed altre onde,
Nelle cui verdi sponde
Spuntati ad or ad or alla tua chioma
L' immortal guiderdon d' eterne frondi.
Perchè alle spalle tue soverchia soma?'
Canzon, dirotti, e tu per me rispondi:
'Dice mia Donna, e 'l suo dir è il mio cuore,
"Questa è lingua di cui si vanta Amore."'

V.

DIODATI (e te 'l dirò con maraviglia),
Quel ritroso io, ch' amor spreggiar solea
E de' suoi lacci spesso mi ridea,
Già caddi, ov' uom dabben talor s 'impiglia.
Nè treccie d' oro nè guancia vermiglia
M' abbaglian sì, ma sotto nova idea
Pellegrina bellezza che 'l cuor bea,
Portamenti alti onesti, e nelle ciglia

Quel sereno fulgor d' amabil nero,
Parole adorne di lingua più d'una,
E 'l cantar che di mezzo l' emispero
Traviar ben può la faticosa Luna;
E degli occhi suoi avventa sì gran fuoco
Che l' incerar gli orecchi mi fia poco.

VI.

PER certo i bei vostr' occhi, Donna mia,
Esser non può che non sian lo mio sole;
Sì mi percuoton forte, come ei suole
Per l' arene di Libia chi s' invia,
Mentre un caldo vapor (nè sentì pria)
Da quel lato si spinge ove mi duole,
Che forse amanti nelle lor parole
Chiaman sospir; io non so che si sia.
Parte rinchiusa e turbida si cela
Scossomi il petto, e poi n' uscendo poco
Quivi d' attorno o s' agghiaccia o s' ingiela;
Ma quanto agli occhi giunge a trovar loco
Tutte le notti a me suol far piovose,
Finchè mia alba rivien colma di rose.

VII.

GIOVANE, piano, e semplicetto amante,
Poichè fuggir me stesso in dubbio sono,
Madonna, a voi del mio cuor l' umil dono
Farò divoto. Io certo a prove tante
L' ebbi fedele, intrepido, costante,
Di pensieri leggiadro, accorto, e buono.
Quando rugge il gran mondo, e scocca il tuono,
S' arma di se, e d' intero diamante,

Tanto del forse e d' invidia sicuro,
Di timori, e speranze al popol use,
Quanto d' ingegno e d' alto valor vago,
E di cetra sonora, e delle Muse.
Sol troverete in tal parte men duro
Ove Amor mise l' insanabil ago.

VIII.

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY.

CAPTAIN or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honour did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

IX.

[TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY.]

LADY, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labour up the hill of heavenly Truth,
The better part with Mary and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.

Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.

X.

TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY.

DAUGHTER to that good Earl, once President
Of England's Council and her Treasury,
Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee,
And left them both, more in himself content,
Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,
Killed with report that old man eloquent,
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourished, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet:
So well your words his noble virtues praise
That all both judge you to relate them true
And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

XI.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES.

A BOOK was writ of late called *Tetrachordon*,
And woven close, both matter, form, and style;
The subject new: it walked the town a while,
Numbering good intellects; now seldom pored on.
Cries the stall-reader, "Bless us! what a word on
A title-page is this!"; and some in file

Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile-
End Green. Why is it harder, sirs, than *Gordon,*
Colkitto, or *Macdonnel*, or *Galasp?*
Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.
Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek,
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward Greek.

XII.

ON THE SAME.

I DID but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs;
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs
Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when Truth would set them free.
Licence they mean when they cry Liberty;
For who loves that must first be wise and good:
But from that mark how far they rove we see,
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

BECAUSE you have thrown off your Prelate Lord,
And with stiff vows renounced his Liturgy,
To seize the widowed whore Plurality
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,

Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
 To force our consciences that Christ set free,
 And ride us with a Classic Hierarchy,
 Taught ye by mere A. S. and Rutherford?
Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,
 Would have been held in high esteem with Paul
 Must now be named and printed heretics
By shallow Edwards and Scotch What-d'ye-call!
 But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
 Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent,
 That so the Parliament
May with their wholesome and preventive shears
Clip your phylacteries, though baulk your ears,
 And succour our just fears,
When they shall read this clearly in your charge:
New *Presbyter* is but old *Priest* writ large.

XIII.

TO MR. H. LAWES, ON HIS AIRS.

HARRY, whose tuneful and well-measured song
 First taught our English music how to span
 Words with just note and accent, not to scan
 With Midas' ears, committing short and long,
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
 With praise enough for Envy to look wan;
 To after age thou shalt be writ the man
 That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.
Thou honour'st Verse, and Verse must send her wing
 To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
 That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
 Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,
 Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

XIV.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHERINE THOMSON, MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND, DECEASED DEC. 16, 1646.

WHEN Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthy load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on; and Faith, who knew them best
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And speak the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

XV.

ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX, AT THE SIEGE OF COLCHESTER.

FAIRFAX, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
And rumours loud that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,

And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

XVI.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, MAY 1652,

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

XVII.

TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER.

VANE, young in years, but in sage counsel old,
Than whom a better senator ne'er held
The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled
The fierce Epirot and the African bold,
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled;
Then to advise how war may best, upheld,

Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage; besides, to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

XVIII.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

XIX.

[ON HIS BLINDNESS.]

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,

"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

XX.

[TO MR. LAWRENCE.]

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius reinspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

XXI.

[TO CYRIACK SKINNER.]

CYRIACK, whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause,
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench,

To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth that after no repenting draws;
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

XXII.

[TO THE SAME.]

CYRIACK, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

XXIII.

[ON HIS DECEASED WIFE.]

METHOUGHT I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,

Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the Old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

END OF VOL. II.

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